ENGLISH STUDIES IN AFRICA

Volume 3 September, 1960 Number 2

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ENGLISH STUDIES IN AFRICA

PROVINCIAL AND CONTINENTAL: WRITERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

H. K. GIRLING

IN A PROVINCE: Laurens van der Post hit a happy title for his first novel, a story of a friendship between a young man in a small town in the Eastern Province and his Xhosa servant. Both in the title and in the theme, van der Post caught the situation of several generations of South African writers in English: they lived in a province, and in their writing tried to reconcile their respect for Europe and their affection for the land and people of their artless country.

What does it mean, living "in a province"? The Latin meaning was not derogatory; only in recent years has 'provincial' acquired in England the associations of wet mackintoshes and a drift to the pub on Sunday evenings. The imperialist connotations were more heroic; a 'province' signified some distant part of the world probably hot and either dusty or waterlogged, where a dedicated band of administrators overawed some millions of the local population by taking hip-baths into the jungle.

Provincialism for writers in South Africa has less complacent associations. Of the thousands of books in our bookshops, only school text-books and collections of travellers' tales are published at home. We cannot support a single literary magazine in English but we import periodicals by the shipload. Each South African writer has had to accept the indifference of his countrymen and to look for recognition and reward to Europe and America, where authors who carved peepholes through which European and American readers might view the shaggy African scene were welcome additions to publishers' lists. The more ambitious task of revealing Africa to those who live in Africa, our writers for long had to forego.

Our first poet was Thomas Pringle, who needed no public because he had his own printing press. Since his time, some of our best poets—Roy Campbell, William Plomer and F. T. Prince—have discovered in England an audience their own country did not provide. Our novelists—Olive Schreiner, Pauline Smith and Sarah Gertrude Millin—willy-nilly made

allowances for the fact that the people who bought or borrowed their books lived in England, not in South Africa. The readers could be pardoned for inferring that Johannesburg was some kind of inland Cardiff, with streets full of black and white faces mingled together, and that the Karoo was like a drier version of the Yorkshire moors, where people behaved as violently as the characters in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Writers paid the penalties, and sometimes gathered in the rewards, of being tolerantly regarded as 'provincial'.

Then the shape of the world changed. Europe, the point from which the provinces had measured their distance, found itself in 1945 no longer the centre. It was like the aftermath of the fall of Rome when every tribe suddenly discovered its own uniqueness. The English literary provinces declared their independence overnight (or so it seemed). Even South Africa. Three prominent prose writers appeared on the scene: Alan Paton, Nadine Gordimer and Dan Jacobson. The poets were not quite of this standing, but Guy Butler and several others were beginning to hammer a specifically South African sensibility into verse. And though the interest of the public was engaged elsewhere (Ellis Park and Newlands), and the cash-on-the-counter customers were still Europeans and Americans, these writers were not speaking about their country for the benefit of outsiders, but were speaking to South Africans with such authority that the world pricked up its ears. At home, the chosen audience continued to listen to cricket scores.

We may wonder what it was that gave Alan Paton the assurance to write as if Johannesburg were a metropolis, not merely the largest town in an obscure province. Why is it that in *Cry, the Beloved Country* he does not treat his theme as something exotic, belonging particularly to Africa or to the Union? Paton implies that there is nothing special about living in South Africa. People live there just as they might live in Chicago, Marseilles, Manchester or Sydney. But people expose themselves most completely in their preoccupations, the things that they think make them different. So whereas English novelists write about social classes and snobbery, supposedly English specialties, and American novelists choose the home-grown varieties of social opportunism and political corruption, South African novelists write about race and colour discriminations. Novelists do not compete with sociologists or politicians; they

regard any one of these subjects as no more than a local setting for motives and desires common to everyone. Alan Paton's novel made a simple yet remarkable assertion about South Africans. Although we have been told the contrary so often that we have come to believe it, we do not live in a human game reserve laid out for tourists thronging to take photographs of us. We are not anthropoids of different colours, with different labels on the cages. We are just people. Our release from the status of human curiosities was effected by the hurrying figure of a shabby old Zulu clergyman.

Cry, the Beloved Country made us in imagination citizens of the world by allowing us to identify ourselves with Stephen Kumalo. He is the first distinctive South African in our fiction; just an old priest hunting for his delinquent son, but closer to us than any protagonist other novelists have offered. We find that Stephen Kumalo's quest uncovers anxieties and consolations that have sprouted under the sun that warms us all and in the soil we all tread on. Pieter van Vlaanderen in *Too Late the Phalarope* is trapped in a situation that we recognize just as easily. His restlessness which expresses itself in miscegenation is of a piece with our own confused reluctance to accept inwardly as well as outwardly the laws that bind our conduct—whether those laws are embodied in a legal code, in social conventions, or in habits of mind established by popular opinion. As soon as the identification is made, as soon as we consent to regard ourselves as being of the same flesh as Kumalo and van Vlaanderen, we begin to see that the burdens they carry do not belong to one race or to one country. The guilt we share with them, though defined by our country and its people, is one which does not isolate us as South Africans, but immerses us in a universal sin and a universal suffering. This is the point where we lost our provincialism, the sense of being separated from the centre.

Nadine Gordimer and Dan Jacobson helped us to find our bearings in the new situation. In her novels and stories, Nadine Gordimer exemplifies a single truth about our lives in this country: that we go on observing and accumulating information, but never reach the stage of understanding what we have assembled. In momentary perceptions, characters in her stories glimpse sufficient evidence of an unseen life going on around them, often in the dilemmas of servants or of chance

acquaintances, to realize that this other life will always remain a mystery. The sense of a failure of comprehension is intensified in her latest novel, *A World of Strangers*, by the presence as narrator of a young man from England who arrives in Johannesburg, whirls in and out of the lives of socialites, horsey types, friends from Orlando and Alexandra, liberals, jazz singers and office girls, without ever assessing what his experiences add up to. Largely he prefers not to compare the different ways of life he brushes against. And, we come to realize, so do we. Miss Gordimer convinces us that we cannot connect. Her pages dissolve our abstractions: words like 'an African', 'a European', even 'nationalism' and '*apartheid*', refuse to fall as glibly as before from our lips. People and things in her books are seen in a hard brilliant light that emphasizes weights, volumes and surfaces, the edginess of material objects and the impenetrability of personalities. We see shapes from the outside more clearly than we have ever seen them before, and at the same time we realize the more desperately that we shall never know them from the inside. Strangers in the most haunted sense, when even familiar objects have turned against us, we are dislodged from our obstinate complacency of the man on the spot, and obliged to agree that we are just as puzzled as the people who observe our behaviour from far away.

If Nadine Gordimer has levered us out of our cosy opinions by demonstrating our ignorance, Dan Jacobson accuses us of more self-knowledge than we care to admit. He demonstrates how a South African novelist may laugh or suffer with his compatriots and yet remain detached. Although his characters are involved in situations that are peculiarly South African: frayed relationships with farm servants in *The Trap*, degeneration and miscegenation in *A Dance in the Sun*, and illicit diamond buying in *The Price of Diamonds*, Dan Jacobson treats these large and sometimes hair-raising issues as if they were no more startling than extravagances of social ambitions or political intrigues. He is deeply concerned about the situations, but he takes their presence on the scene so much for granted that all his attention is given to the people entangled in the attendant miseries. We suffer with his characters not because we take over their distress as our own, but because we realize that our own attitudes, inclinations and prejudices are

causing the suffering. In his novels we see ourselves in images hideous but true; it is the public face by which others judge us that looks back at us from his pages, not the face our self-esteem indulgently expects. We recoil in fright. For a moment we have been sufficiently detached to understand a fragment of truth about ourselves.

Although Alan Paton made the break-through in fiction from the provincial to the world scene, a break-through in poetry has remained rather an idea than an actuality. Yet, just as Pauline Smith's novels give us a genuine whiff of the soil as a foretaste of the pungent earthiness of Alan Paton's, so a new generation of South African poets seems to be reaching towards a poet still to come, an English poet who will mould our native earth into an enduring form. Many of the newer poets in Guy Butler's *Book of South African Verse* are comparatively unknown, and several are so difficult to understand that they seem to be trying out an idiom they cannot pronounce. The poems of Margaret Allonby, Anne Welsh, Ruth Miller, Sydney Clouts and Guy Butler himself are all so directly indicative of struggles with the substance of poetry that each brow seems to bear the same beads of honest South African sweat. These poets are tense with the attempt to turn the familiar into poetry, using local scenes, ideas and emotions so deeply engrained in their very habits of perception that they would never regard such material as exotic, though to European readers it might appear to be savage and intractable.

When writers are more aware of the nature of the object in their gaze than its purpose, they write a novel or a poem about the process of writing. In this way Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* might be called 'The Story of Writing a South African Novel'. Similarly, these poets are writing poems about how a poem is written. They know, as Olive Schreiner knew, that Africa is in some deep way a mirror for their poetic personalities and they clutch at a revealing image. This baffles the reader, for though a poet may see himself symbolically in a tree, a patch of ground or a Johannesburg street, a reader needs to understand the context of the poet's insight before the image of tree, ground or street can have for him the same force of self-revelation.

Margaret Allonby's poem on this subject, appropriately called *Reflection*, is her attempt to discover herself in a river

scene. The obscurity of the poem is almost justified by the strain of her desire to conquer the scene by means of poetry. The nearest she comes to an explicit statement is in the lines where reflections in water become an image of her perception of her own place in the scene:

> The being is the being, miraculous; the river flows
> In tree, tree in river, earth's innocence
> In us.

The beautiful last phrase in these lines epitomizes what can be called the central insight of post-war South African writing in English:

> earth's innocence
> In us.

South African writers who have swung loose from provincial dependence on a centre have come to a certain vision about the land: the land is innocent. They attribute crime and misery to people who have brought sin into the land. They affirm that whatever the inhabitants do or try to do, there is a rhythm in the sunshine and rain, an innocence in the earth itself, which in the end will assert itself as more powerful than the doings of men.

The novelists in their successes, the poets in their struggles, are showing the way to a single indigenous way of living, and expressing a single loyalty to the land in all its appearances and to the people in all their guises. The sociologists and economists straggle far behind the writers in the exploration of this sense of unity, the politicians further behind still. In the last ten years, since the publication of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, writers in English in South Africa have come to maturity. Their confidence may be expressed in a phrase: they are Africans, not Europeans. In the course of time, we other South Africans will cease to regard ourselves as European provincials, and will commit ourselves to Africa, the land we have chosen.

SENSIBILITY AND SENSE: A READING OF *PERSUASION*

W. R. MARTIN

HOW ONE reads *Persuasion* depends primarily, I think, on how one takes Lady Russell. Her character is the most important crux, and it is the first: the opening chapters present her to us.

The first five paragraphs encourage the reader to laugh confidently at Sir Walter Elliot's ridiculous "vanity of person and situation." "He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy." Then we are introduced to Lady Russell, "a sensible, deserving woman" who is characterized by "kindness" and "good principles." We feel, at first, as confident in approving of her as we do in disapproving of Sir Walter.

In Chapter II the characters face the problem of Sir Walter's debts. He feels that any but the most trivial of reformations would disgrace his name, but Lady Russell and Anne press for drastic economies. Here again Jane Austen tempts us to give almost unqualified approval to Lady Russell, but we are being exposed to the danger of thinking as Mrs Dashwood does: "It is enough; to say that he is unlike Fanny is enough. It implies every thing amiable. I love him already."[1]

If we read attentively enough we find quite a different meaning. Lady Russell "drew up plans of economy, she made exact calculations."[2] All this seems to be saying is that, laudably enough, she was doing some arithmetic to work out how much the various schemes would save. But the next paragraph suggests, I believe, just what the exact calculations were. Lady Russell says that "the true dignity of Sir Walter Elliot will be very far from lessened, in the eyes of sensible people, by his acting like a man of principle. What will he be doing, in fact, but what very many of our first families have done—or ought to do?—There will be nothing singular in his case; and it is singularity which often makes the worst part of our suffering,

[1] R. W. Chapman, ed., *Sense and Sensibility* (O.U.P. 1933), p. 16.
[2] R. W. Chapman, ed., *Persuasion* (O.U.P. 1933), p. 12.

as it always does of our conduct . . . the person who has contracted debts must pay them; and though a great deal is due to the feelings of the gentleman, and the head of a house, like your father, there is still more due to the character of an honest man."[3] She has calculated just how much honesty is necessary to maintain and even enhance the reputation of a gentleman. She advocates honesty as a policy: she is honest on principle, by rule, but not by nature. What is important for her is not what you are but what people think you are.

The point we should take is not that Lady Russell and Anne are similar, and different from Sir Walter. Their advice, their conduct, is similar, but, ironically, it is Sir Walter that Lady Russell is really like. Their motives are corrupt, and corrupt in the same way. Both take the appearance, the disguise, for the reality. Anne is quite different. She is "on the side of honesty against importance." "She considered it as an act of indispensable duty to clear away the claims of creditors, with all the expedition which the most comprehensive retrenchments could secure, and saw no dignity in any thing short of it. She wanted it to be prescribed, and felt as a duty."[4]

Lady Russell is "most correct in her conduct, strict in her notions of decorum, and with manners that were held a standard of good-breeding."[5] She lives by a code, and the letter of its law. Time and again she holds an opinion that is right or does a creditable thing, but her reasons and motives do not bear the closest scrutiny. Why does she disapprove of Mrs Clay's visits to Kellynch-hall? We are indeed told that she sees her as "a very dangerous companion," but only after another ground for her objection has twice been mentioned: Lady Russell thought it "a friendship quite out of place," and, "Mrs Clay was, in Lady Russell's estimate, a very unequal . . . companion."[6]

Lady Russell cultivates Sir Walter's friendship because "she gave the dignity of a baronet all its due," and because he was "an old acquaintance, an attentive neighbour, an obliging landlord, the husband of her very dear friend, the father of Anne and her sisters."[7] This formidable array of rather mixed reasons—some scarcely disinterested—seems to suggest the strength of her attachment to him, but the point lies in what is

[3] ibid. p. 12.
[4] ibid. p. 12-13.
[5] ibid. p. 11.
[6] ibid. p. 15-16.
[7] ibid. p. 11.

omitted: we are not told that she liked Sir Walter. Her attachment to Anne, apparently the most creditable thing about her, is oddly put: "To Lady Russell, indeed, she [Anne] was a most dear and highly valued god-daughter, favourite and friend. Lady Russell loved them all; but it was only in Anne that she could fancy the mother to revive again."[8] She loves Anne partly at least for her mother's sake, and because she has a proprietary interest in her as a god-daughter; and the warmth in the friendship seems to come from Anne.

Lady Russell is, I believe, Jane Austen's most penetrating study of the gulf that can exist between right conduct and virtue. This problem was her main preoccupation as a novelist, and it was in the polite world of the country gentry that it could best be investigated. She allows Darcy to comment on the problem more explicitly than her later heroes: "I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. As a child I was taught what was *right*, but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit."[9] His was the common situation, but he, like Emma Woodhouse, wins through, and learns what Lady Russell will never learn.

Lady Russell does not always do the right thing. She persuades Anne to break her engagement to Frederick Wentworth. This exposes her for what she is even before she tries to promote a marriage between Anne and Mr Elliot, who is "rational, discreet, polished."[10] The novel makes this the critical test: what is a person's attitude to true affection?

There is another, related test. Right through the novel we are shown different attitudes to children. Sir Walter wants a tenant without children; Lady Russell will not, in future, call at Uppercross when the children are home for the Christmas holidays; Mary Musgrove (*née* Elliot) has little real affection for her children. On the other hand in the Musgrove family there is an easy, happy relation between children and the parents (though the latter have—it has its significance—a "fond partiality for their own daughters' performance, and a total indifference to any other person's")[11]; Charles Musgrove's

[8] ibid. p. 6.
[9] R. W. Chapman, ed., *Pride and Prejudice* (O.U.P. 1932), p. 369.
[10] R. W. Chapman, ed., *Persuasion*, p. 161.
[11] ibid. p. 47.

theory "as to the management of their children . . . was much better than the wife's [Mary's], and his practice not so bad;"[12] Admiral Croft delights in playing with the Musgrove boys;[13] Capt. Harville "made toys for the children;"[14] and—a climax to the series—Anne's "usefulness to little Charles would always give some sweetness to the memory of her two months visit."[15] The Musgroves, the naval gentlemen and Anne Elliot are clearly different from all the other Elliots and Lady Russell.

In the same way, this basic division and these finer shades of distinction are established by the more prominent test—the attitude to love. Sir Walter's is, of course, ridiculous. Lady Russell puts an end to the "exquisite felicity"[16] of Anne and Frederick because she has "of anything approaching to imprudence a horror."[17] She virtually forbids Anne's marriage to a young man who, in Lady Russell's view, has "no hopes of attaining affluence, but in the chances of a most uncertain profession," who is, nevertheless, "confident," "full of life and ardour," having a "fearlessness of mind."[18] These intrinsic qualities she has no value for. She requires absolute security (found, perhaps, only in the grave!), not a mere competence, but "affluence," and to her the Navy is only "a most uncertain" profession. Because she is "anxiously zealous," "rational and consistent,"[19] she values only status, connection and wealth, extrinsic things. She sees everything about Frederick except the man himself, and the extent of her failure is ironically pointed when, after being told her view that Anne would be "sunk by him [Frederick] into a state of most wearing, anxious, youth-killing dependence,"[20] we find, a page later, that Anne, having taken her advice, has suffered "an early loss of bloom and spirits."

Sir Walter's absurd attitude is by no means irrelevant to this central theme of the novel; it is a parody of Lady Russell's, but essentially the same. Anne's withdrawal from the engagement has the very result that he deplores—loss of beauty. His remedy for this—the "constant use of Gowland"[21]—is the absurd extension of the belief that the reality can be changed by manipulating appearances, that happiness can be achieved by acquir-

[12] ibid. p. 44.
[13] ibid. p. 49.
[14] ibid. p. 99.
[15] ibid. p. 93.
[16] ibid. p. 26.
[17] ibid. p. 27.
[18] ibid. p. 26-27.
[19] ibid. p. 11.
[20] ibid. p. 27.
[21] ibid. p. 146.

ing status and affluence. Sir Walter is ludicrous and innocuous, but Lady Russell, who wears the disguise of virtue, is baneful.

Anne translates the words of a song for Mr Elliot. She says: "This is nearly the sense, or rather the meaning of the words, for certainly the sense of an Italian love-song must not be talked of—but it is as nearly the meaning as I can give."[22] What she is saying is that the real meaning or value of the song is not to be found in the words, still less in a translation. The words are, in a way, only the appearance of the song, or its tangible dress. The true value of the song will escape Mr Elliot (and Lady Russell) because he can measure only the sense of the words. The song itself will escape him, just as the true value of Frederick—and, for that matter, of Anne—escapes Lady Russell.

There are three groups in the novel that have a sense of real values—the Musgroves, the naval gentleman, and the hero and heroine. A good deal of the novel is concerned with making nice distinctions between these three groups. They all respond, in their various ways, to natural beauty or to poetry, or to both. The Musgroves are innocent of any response to poetry, and of natural beauty they are aware in only a rudimentary way: they shoot, go rat-hunting and try for a gleaning of nuts. The Musgrove girls do go for walks, but only when there is the chance of meeting, or being accompanied by, young gentlemen in whom they have a particular interest.

As for the naval group, Admiral Croft and his wife enjoy rather hazardous drives in the country. Frederick says, "What glorious weather . . ."[23] His response, like the Admiral's, seems to have an appropriately professional cast, but there is more to him than that remark suggests, and here I must notice the opinion of no less an admirer of Jane Austen than R. W. Chapman. He has referred to the description of the beauties of Lyme[24] as a "rare purplish patch." "The gentle rhapsody on Lyme—doubtless autobiographical—is not very unlike the digression into literary criticism that has been noted as an excrescence on *Northanger Abbey*."[25] The description of Lyme may be autobiographical; if "purplish" means beautiful it is certainly that—and in a lyrical manner that is rare in her

[22] ibid. p. 186.
[23] ibid. p. 84.
[24] ibid. p. 95-96.
[25] *Jane Austen: Facts and Problems* (O.U.P. 1948), p. 206.

novels. But it is not a patch: indeed I believe that in it Jane Austen is executing an important part of the novel's design.

A page or so before the "gentle rhapsody" we are told that Wentworth has visited his friends and brought back a "description of the fine country about Lyme," which was "feelingly attended to by the party" at Uppercross. Later, referring to the period after Louisa's fall (which is the turning-point of the novel) Wentworth says: "The country round Lyme is very fine. I walked and rode a great deal; and the more I saw, the more I found to admire."[26] The "rhapsody" is too tender to come from the spirited Wentworth as *oratio recta*, but it is a pointer to his sensibility (which, as I shall show later, has some affinity to Anne's) and, more obliquely, to that of the Harvilles, because they have chosen Lyme to live in. Incidentally, the naval group show their superiority to the Musgroves in this, as they do in *not* shooting. This pointed abstention gives significance to the one occasion on which Wentworth did shoot, with a gun borrowed from Charles Musgrove.[27] This happened at a time when—it is his own confession—"I had been grossly wrong, trying whether I could attach myself to either of the [Musgrove] girls."[28]

The naval group have a contact with literature, but it is a rather ludicrously limited one. Benwick's tremulousness over Scott and Byron is patent self-indulgence;[29] Harville makes "very pretty shelves, for a tolerable collection of well-bound volumes, the property of Captain Benwick."[30]

It is Anne who responds to natural beauty and poetry with true feeling and delicacy. "Her *pleasure* in the walk must arise from the exercise and the day, from the view of the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and withered hedges, and from repeating to herself some few of the thousand poetical descriptions extant of autumn."[31] So finely integrated is Jane Austen's system of notation, that this sensibility of Anne's is unobtrusively established for a sharply ironic point very early in the novel. Whereas Lady Russell thought "it would be too much to expect Sir Walter to descend into a small house in his own neighbourhood," Anne's ambition was "a small house in their

[26] R. W. Chapman, ed., *Persuasion*, p. 183.
[27] ibid. p. 240.
[28] ibid. p. 243.
[29] ibid. p. 100.
[30] ibid. p. 99.
[31] ibid. p. 84.

own neighbourhood, where they might . . . still have the pleasure of sometimes seeing the lawns and groves of Kellynch."[32] Sir Walter and Lady Russell are attached to Kellynch because of the status it gives; Anne loves it for itself.

Every character in the novel is measured according to his or her capacity, or respect, for true affection. Lady Russell and Sir Walter fail the test altogether. Mrs Musgrove expresses the attitude of her family when she says of the match between Henrietta and Charles Hayter: "And so, ma'am, all these things considered, though we could have wished it different, yet altogether we did not think it fair to stand out any longer; for Charles Hayter was quite wild about it, and Henrietta was pretty near as bad; and so we thought they had better marry at once."[33] The Musgroves hesitate between opposing the match on grounds of prudence and giving an immediate blessing. They seem to represent ordinary, blundering mankind; a healthy generous instinct finally asserts itself and pushes them over to the right side.

There is no doubt about how the naval group are disposed. They are whole-heartedly for early—in fact, rather hasty—marriage. Capt. Benwick, it is true, had become engaged to Fanny Harville, and, when they had been "a year or two waiting for fortune and promotion," Fanny died.[34] Fortune and promotion came, but too late. However, Benwick learns from his mistake, and marries Louisa with an alacrity that surprises everyone. He runs true to the naval type in the end.

Admiral Croft asks, "How many days was it, my dear, between the first time of my seeing you and our sitting down together in our lodgings at North Yarmouth?"[35] Of Frederick and Louisa he says, "He was courting her week after week. The only wonder was, what they could be waiting for."[36] Indeed, reluctant as one is to whisper a criticism of a man as lovable as Admiral Croft the question must be asked whether he, and his kind, are not a little too impulsive, a little lacking in the highest delicacy and discrimination. He cannot really tell which Miss Musgrove is which. He can never remember Louisa's name: "I should never be out if they were all Sophys [his wife is a Sophy], or something of that sort."[37] To him young ladies are

[32] ibid. p. 14.
[33] ibid. p. 230.
[34] ibid. p. 96.
[35] ibid. p. 92.
[36] ibid. p. 171.
[37] ibid. p. 171.

very fine—and all rather alike. He says of Louisa's match with Benwick: "If a girl likes another man better, it is very fit she should have him."[38] Louisa has turned from Wentworth, his brother-in-law, to Benwick, but he feels no rancour: he is wonderfully warm-hearted, but to him it seems right that a girl should marry a man if she "likes him better than" another. He is magnificent, but he isn't the finest that the novel portrays.

Frederick Wentworth too, after his early disappointment, falls short in the same rumbustious way: "Any body between fifteen and thirty may have me for asking. A little beauty, and a few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy, and I am a lost man."[39] Here we can see the extraordinary subtlety of Jane Austen's art and her preoccupation with moral judgement. Wentworth is saying that he is like the Admiral, but the fact that he is joking shows that he knows that the attitude to love that is exemplified in the Admiral falls a good deal short of the ideal. He is better than the Admiral, and yet again, in this phase of his life, he isn't, because he flirts with Louisa; it is her fall on the Cobb, or the situation that her fall precipitates, that pulls him up and stops him from taking the way of a sailor with a maid.

At least one critic has said that Jane Austen was a prude.[40] Consider the Admiral's comment on Louisa's fall: "A new sort of way this, for a young fellow to be making love, by breaking his mistress's head!—is not it, Miss Elliot?—This is breaking a head and giving a plaister truly!"[41] The next paragraph reads: "Admiral Croft's manners were not quite of the tone to suit Lady Russell, but they delighted Anne. His goodness of heart and simplicity of character were irresistible." My impression is that the Admiral has told a polite version of a broad ward-room joke and that Lady Russell is shocked. Anne sees through the ribald dress to the warmth and goodness that inform the joke. Nevertheless, the joke is a comment on the strain of coarseness in the typically naval attitude to courting in the novel. For the Admiral marriage is almost mating.

A key passage in the novel is Wentworth's dissertation on the nut. "Let those who would be happy be firm.—Here is a

[38] ibid. p. 172.
[39] ibid. p. 62.
[40] Richard Aldington: Introduction to Chawton Edition of Jane Austen's Works in *Pride and Prejudice* (London, 1948), p. iv.
[41] R. W. Chapman, ed., *Persuasion*, pp. 126-7.

nut (catching one down from an upper bough). To exemplify,—a beautiful glossy nut, which, blessed with original strength, has outlived all the storms of autumn. Not a puncture, not a weak spot any where.—This nut—while so many of its brethren have fallen and been trodden under foot, is still in possession of all the happiness that a hazel-nut can be supposed capable of."[42]

There are many meanings here. Wentworth's 'good' is happiness, a real good, unlike Lady Russell's. Then, he values the nut for its own sake—it is a "beautiful glossy" nut—not merely for its usefulness. Further, he shows us that he is, in an important sense, in contact with the natural world. Nature is more to him than an opportunity for shooting birds, hunting nuts, and going for drives: with his essentially masculine sensibility, he looks to it for illustration, for guidance. Of course, Wentworth has himself always had the qualities of the nut—strength and firmness. What he has to gain, or perhaps regain, are the qualities of Anne—delicacy, gentleness. But what he says marks not only his difference, at this stage, from Anne, but also his likeness to her. There is a suggestion here of poetic awareness in the general intention of the exhortation and also in its eloquent elegiac tone. It recalls the passage already quoted in which Anne repeats the poetical descriptions of autumn, and another: "The sweet scenes of autumn were for a while put by—unless some tender sonnet, fraught with the apt analogy of the declining year, with declining happiness, and the images of youth and hope, and spring, all gone together, blessed her memory."[43] Anne's gentle resignation contrasts with Wentworth's strength and assertiveness, but there are similarities that are as important as the differences. Both Anne and Wentworth value happiness, look for analogies in autumn and respond poetically to the season. It is significant that Anne repeats poetry that others have written and that Wentworth makes his own. All three passages occur in the same chapter, and the pattern has the delicate precision that Jane Austen delighted in.

Wentworth, then, has his own "life and ardour" and "fearlessness"—the Admiral's fearlessness in driving his gig[44] is slightly ridiculous—and the potentiality, at least, of other

[42] ibid. p. 88.
[43] ibid. p. 85.
[44] ibid. p. 92.

qualities which develop fully only when he loves Anne, and which he, in a sense, learns from her. In the end "they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their re-union, than when it had first been projected; more tender, more tried, more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment."[45]

Anne has to learn too. What both she and Wentworth are in the beginning is presented with Jane Austen's characteristic clarity when young Walter Musgrove "began to fasten himself upon her [Anne,] as she knelt, in such a way that, busy as she was about Charles, she could not shake him off." Anne is selfless and gentle to a fault; she can't assert herself. "In another moment, however, she found herself in the state of being released from him; . . . though he had bent down her head so much, . . . his little sturdy hands were unfastened from around her neck and he was resolutely borne away, before she knew that Captain Wentworth had done it."[46] In Wentworth's assertiveness there is a hint of more severity than is necessary. Just as he learns gentleness, she learns to assert herself. In Bath she gradually and still delicately takes her destiny out of Lady Russell's hands and into her own. When her progress was complete, "her character was now fixed on [Frederick's] mind as perfection itself, maintaining the loveliest medium of fortitude and gentleness."[47]

A. H. Wright says of *Persuasion*: "Prudence and love are in conflict . . . both qualities are seen to be desirable."[48] This judgement is, I believe, based on a misreading of the novel and of the character of Lady Russell in particular. Wright justifies his opinion by quoting Anne: "I was right in submitting to" Lady Russell. A longer quotation from the same paragraph must correct the impression. Anne explains: "Do not mistake me, however. I am not saying she did not err in her advice, . . . and for myself, I certainly never should, in any circumstance of tolerable similarity, give such advice. But I mean, that I was right in submitting to her, and that if I had done otherwise . . . I should have suffered in my conscience."[49] Anne clearly means that, at the age of nineteen, she was not able to judge for her-

[45] ibid. p. 240-241.
[46] ibid. p. 80.
[47] ibid. p. 241.
[48] *Jane Austen's Novels* (London, 1953), p. 35.
[49] R. W. Chapman, ed., *Persuasion*, p. 246.

self. At twenty-seven she sees Lady Russell's prudence for what it is—a respectable disguise for a wholly false scale of values. Anne learns something from Mrs Smith, who married for love at nineteen, and passed through "time and sickness, and sorrow"—hardships brought on by imprudence. "We were a thoughtless, gay set, without any strict rules of conduct. We lived for enjoyment."[50] In spite of this Mrs Smith has "the power of turning readily from evil to good. . . . It was the choicest gift of Heaven," and seemed "designed to counterbalance almost every other want."[51]

Even "the high-spirited, joyous, talking Louisa,"[52] with the blind Musgrove instinct for what is good and true, has a comment to make on prudence: "If I loved a man, as she loves the Admiral, I would always be with him, nothing should ever separate us, and I would rather be overturned by him, than driven safely by anybody else."[53] In the terms of the novel, prudence is worldliness, and at war with courage, generosity, love and life itself.

I would even go further than Q. D. Leavis, who says in an Introduction to *Sense and Sensibility*, that "Jane Austen came to think less well of the prudential outlook . . . as we can see in *Persuasion*."[54] I think that it is true to say that *Persuasion* stands *Sense and Sensibility* on its head. But it is misleading to speak as if one work of art could contradict another: Blake's *The Divine Image* and *A Divine Image* are both 'true' poems. Strangely enough, it is the *Songs of Innocence and Experience* that I am most reminded of by the themes and technique in *Persuasion*, which has not the vivacity and virtuosity that is in *Emma*, but is, I think, a more profound novel.

Louisa and Benwick are changed by their love for each other. They improve: Louisa listens to poetry and Benwick goes rat-hunting.[55] The affair is presented in a ridiculous light, but it points to the love of Anne and Frederick Wentworth. They complete each other, and their union has an allegorical force: it is a union of strength and gentleness, a victory for true affection over false prudence. Anne and Frederick join Emma and

[50] ibid. p. 201.
[51] ibid. p. 154.
[52] ibid. p. 166.
[53] ibid. p. 85.
[54] *Sense and Sensibility* (London, 1958), p. xv.
[55] R. W. Chapman, ed., *Persuasion*, p. 218-219.

George Knightley, and reach a condition for which happiness is too pale a word. Their conduct is not a mask: pleasure and virtue have become one. It is almost an apotheosis.

EXPERIMENT IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN POETRY

JOHN R. DOYLE, Jr.

ENDURING strength in literature emerges from the undeviating practice of looking simultaneously towards both the past and the future. Too great a preoccupation with and admiration for what has already been successful may result in stagnation or trivial refinements. Too great a striving for newness and differences destroys all sense of direction. Literary power lies in proportion. Yet no man has ever been privileged to see or read those directions by which a hopeful writer may quicken inert raw materials and bring forth a literary creation. Not only each writer but each generation must decide, albeit often unconsciously, where the major emphasis is to go: to a study of what has already been done, especially what has immediately preceded, or to what may still lie ahead. During the early decades of the twentieth century, many of the young writers of America started exploring the territory lying before them. Some of them crossed the Atlantic; others stayed at home. All experimented.

Early in the twentieth century, T. S. Eliot began his long series of distant journeys, a geographical and intellectual movement which carried him all of the way to Stockholm to receive a Nobel award in literature. Starting from Smith Academy, in St Louis, a department of Washington University, which his grandfather had helped found, Eliot began to retrace the westward steps of his ancestors, who had in the seventeenth century, settled in Massachusetts, having moved from East Coker, Somerset, which many years later made its appearance as the title of one of the *Four Quartets*. In the autumn of 1906, Eliot entered Harvard, where he completed the undergraduate course in three years. He then pursued the study of philosophy in the Harvard graduate school. During 1910-11 he was in Paris, at the Sorbonne, reading philosophy and French literature. From 1911 to 1914 he was back at Harvard studying metaphysics, logic, psychology, and Indic philology.

The first of Eliot's verses to be retained among his *Collected Poems* not only come from this period but show his reaction to

the Boston-Cambridge-Harvard environment. Four of these very early poems, short and simple though they may seem, already reveal Eliot experimenting with most of the methods soon to make him one of the most controversial and then celebrated writers of the century. Here in these brief poems a reader finds the use of prose tones, and of prose tones in juxtaposition with opposing tones; here are found the allusive method, the creation of symbolic names, and the learned epigraphs; here are the subtle changes of pace and the abandonment of simple end-rhyme; here in abundance are the unpoetic and the anti-poetic; here, horrors, was an irreverent questioning of Boston-Cambridge-Harvard values by an Eliot—an *Eliot*. One could say with considerable justification that T. S. Eliot's first problem was to discover a way to insult one's relatives, friends, and associates while making them accept it and like it. One way, of course, to get away with this type of thing, even if one did not succeed in having it approved, was to write so that what one was saying would not be understood. In this direction, Eliot appears to have achieved considerable success. Here are four of the poems with which he started the mystification game.

THE *BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT*

The readers of the *Boston Evening Transcript*
Sway in the wind like a field of ripe corn.

When evening quickens faintly in the street,
Wakening the appetites of life in some
And to others bringing the *Boston Evening Transcript*,
I mount the steps and ring the bell, turning
Wearily, as one would turn to nod good-bye to
Rochefoucauld,
If the street were time and he at the end of the street,
And I say, "Cousin Harriet, here is the *Boston*
Evening Transcript."

AUNT HELEN

Miss Helen Slingsby was my maiden aunt,
And lived in a small house near a fashionable square
Cared for by servants to the number of four.

Now when she died there was silence in heaven
And silence at her end of the street.
The shutters were drawn and the undertaker wiped
his feet—
He was aware that this sort of thing had occurred before.
The dogs were handsomely provided for,
But shortly afterwards the parrot died too.
The Dresden clock continued ticking on the mantel-
piece,
And the footman sat upon the dining-table
Holding the second housemaid on his knees—
Who had always been so careful while her mistress
lived.

COUSIN NANCY

Miss Nancy Ellicott
Strode across the hills and broke them,
Rode across the hills and broke them—
The barren New England hills—
Riding to hounds
Over the cow-pasture.

Miss Nancy Ellicott smoked
And danced all the modern dances;
And her aunts were not quite sure how they felt about it,
But they knew that it was modern.

Upon the glazen shelves kept watch
Matthew and Waldo, guardians of the faith,
The army of unalterable law.

MR APOLLINAX

Ω τῆς καινότητος. Ἡράκλεις, τῆς παραδοξολογίας. εὐμήχανος ἄνθρωπος. Lucian

When Mr Apollinax visited the United States
His laughter tinkled among the teacups.
I thought of Fragilion, that shy figure among the
birch-trees.

And of Priapus in the shrubbery
Gaping at the lady in the swing.
In the palace of Mrs Phlaccus, at Professor Channing-
Cheetah's

He laughed like an irresponsible foetus.
His laughter was submarine and profound
Like an old man of the sea's
Hidden under coral islands
Where worried bodies of drowned men drift down in
the green silence,
Dropping from fingers of surf.
I looked for the head of Mr Apollinax rolling under
a chair

Or grinning over a screen
With seaweed in its hair.
I heard the beat of centaur's hoofs over the hard turf
As his dry and passionate talk devoured the afternoon.

"He is a charming man"—"But after all what did he
mean?"—
"His pointed ears . . . He must be unbalanced,"—
"There was something he said that I might have
challenged."
Of dowager Mrs Phlaccus, and Professor and Mrs
Cheetah
I remember a slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon.

One can indeed imagine what must have been the puzzled and disapproving reaction of the relatives who became the shocked first readers of these poems. Certainly they must have been embarrassed that this son of Henry and Charlotte should offer these to the public, for he was a young man who had up to this time displayed all of the academic brilliance expected from this family of intellectual leaders. How could he fail to see that these compositions were poor? There was no metre. Nor was there rhyme, except for the few haphazard ones in the Apollinax thing and a chance one in *Aunt Helen.*

They were pained that young Tom should consider as suitable for poems the subjects used. No poetry was possible from any of them. Then, too, the family was angry because of the down-

right indecency of all he had said in *Aunt Helen* and shamed by his use of the unmentionable word in *Mr Apollinax*. Speaking of that horrible piece, what would the Channings think—and everyone knew who was meant by Mrs Phlaccus, though none could understand the reason for the name. In every way Tom had been thoughtless. He had even used a line from Meredith without employing quotation marks.

The only respectable material was to be found in *The Boston Evening Transcript*, otherwise completely without merit. The second line, which must have resulted from his Missouri birth and childhood, was perhaps pleasant as an image but most assuredly a poor simile, because quite inaccurate. He certainly should have known better than to use "quickens" in the image of a dying day. What could he mean by "the appetites of life" other than a desire for a good dinner; and if that is the meaning, he should not have separated these from the readers of the *Transcript*. Most senseless of all is calling the street time and thus having La Rochefoucauld standing at the end of time. What, pray, could he have to do with the actions described? Doubtless Tom will say that all of this is modern, but what did he mean? His relatives and friends will be hurt or insulted, yet there will be those who can challenge what he has said. After all, there are some things that are unalterable.

Anyone who has followed Eliot's career knows that never could it have been his intention to insult those close to him. There is in him too much love for his family and too great a concern with tradition for him to treat either with lack of respect. The attempt made here was not to describe Eliot's intentions or methods. Rather, the desire was to capture not only the fact but the tone of the early misreading of the poems. Among the first readers must have been relatives, who certainly failed along with others to understand what this young poet was trying to present.

* * * * *

The journeys of Ezra Pound have been even longer than those of Eliot, and Pound has always travelled more furiously. A descendant on his mother's side of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Pound was born in Hailey, Idaho. His life in the West, however, ended before the age of two. When he was fifteen, he entered the University of Pennsylvania. At twenty-one he went

to Spain for material to write a graduate thesis which would have moved him in the direction of the life of a professional scholar. He completed his research, but after a few months back in the States, he returned to Europe where through the years he lived in England, France, and Italy. His visit lasted for forty years. His return to America was finally at the invitation of the government. Recently he has been released from the necessity of accepting this hospitality.

Pound's restlessness and his enthusiasms are too well known to need further attention, other than to say that they resulted in so many experiments that any discussion of them would require a book. Thus, for Pound, as for Eliot already and for those to follow, I must content myself with calling attention to one thing he did.

Deep in Pound is the need to shock the world, and this is one of the first qualities a reader notices in his work. Early in their investigations of Pound, readers became accustomed to lines such as,

> Bah! I have sung women in three cities,
> But it is all the same;
> And I will sing of the sun.[1]
>
> Hang it all, Robert Browning,
> there can be but the one "Sordello."[2]
>
> I make a pact with you, Walt Whitman—
> I have detested you long enough.[3]
>
> Damn it all! all this our South stinks peace.[4]
>
> Upon learning that the mother wrote verses,
> And that the father wrote verses,
> And that the youngest son was in a publisher's office,
> And that the friend of the second daughter was undergoing a novel,
> The young American pilgrim
> Exclaimed:
> "This is a darn'd clever bunch!"[5]

[1] *Personae*, *The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound* (New York, 1926), p. 6.
[2] *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York, 1948), p. 6.
[3] *Personae*, p. 89.
[4] ibid. p. 28.
[5] ibid. p. 179.

If, of course, Pound had had no more to offer than the quality of shock, we would not be taking time to discuss his work. It seems to me that the quality he was aiming to get into his lines was an interior excitement that he missed in much of the verse being written in the world into which he had been born. Perhaps this longing to discover poetry with interior excitement explains why he interested himself in so many of the significant writers of this century. At one time or another, he attached himself to Eliot, Frost, Yeats, Hemingway, Williams, H.D., and many others. Whether or not this is a valid explanation, his own lines very early begin to show an attempt to create this interior excitement, this immediacy, which is so important an element in poetry. Often, very often, in these early poems, he attempted (frequently with success) to make his reader feel the presence of a person speaking the lines (also the intention of Yeats, Frost, and others), to convince his reader of an actual human state, of human passions, often strong passions. Frequently his poems started with this intention, as the following illustrations will show.

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness. [6]

I am homesick after mine own kind,
Oh I know that there are folk about me, friendly faces,
But I am homesick after mine own kind. [7]

Come, my songs, let us express our baser passions,
Let us express our envy of the man with a steady job
and no worry about the future. [8]

See, they return; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering! [9]

What thou lovest well remains,
the rest is dross
What thou lov'st well shall not be reft from thee [10]

[6] ibid. p. 71.
[7] ibid. p. 20.
[8] ibid. p. 94.
[9] ibid. p. 74.
[10] *Cantos* ('The Pisan Cantos' Section), p. 98-99.

O generation of the thoroughly smug and thoroughly
uncomfortable,
I have seen fishermen picnicking in the sun,
I have seen them with untidy families,
I have seen their smiles full of teeth and heard
ungainly laughter.[11]

The interior excitement which Pound here sought in the intensely personal was transferred to his better efforts when he did not depend upon a dramatically present speaker. For example, here is perhaps his best known imagist poem.

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.[12]

With Pound, however, as soon as a method or a movement was a success, it ceased to interest him. He was already moving on to other methods and movements. Though he journeyed always, and sometimes even ran, he most certainly upon occasion paused long enough to achieve a simple, direct, clear approach in some poems; a style with the needed detachment, yet capable of making felt strong emotions towards significant attitudes and ideas. Even wrenched from context, the following eight lines achieve most of what I have just described.

The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage,
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;
Better mendacities
Than the classics in paraphrase![13]

* * * * *

Probably no poet of the twentieth century has a more different *look* than E. E. Cummings. The 'look', however, does

[11] *Personae*, p. 85.
[12] ibid. p. 109.
[13] ibid. p. 188.

not contain all that he has to contribute to the poetic development of his era, nor is it the major part of his contribution. Many of his poems benefit little or not at all from his special system of typography. In fact, the strange appearance probably is a liability because of its constant use. Ultimately, instead of giving the poem individuality, it creates an impression of sameness. Since many of the poems are traditional in every way except the use of capitals, these particular poems would probably gain if they did not suggest to the reader that he will find a difference that actually does not exist. It would certainly be difficult to demonstrate that the following Italian sonnet achieves anything very significant through the omission of capital letters.

> this is the garden: colors come and go,
> frail azures fluttering from night's outer wing
> strong silent greens serenely lingering,
> absolute lights like baths of golden snow.
> This is the garden: pursed lips do blow
> upon cool flutes within wide glooms, and sing
> (of harps celestial to the quivering string)
> invisible faces hauntingly and slow.
>
> This is the garden. Time shall surely reap,
> and on Death's blade lies many a flower curled,
> in other lands where other songs be sung;
> yet stand They here enraptured, as among
> the slow deep trees perpetual of sleep
> some silver-fingered fountain steals the world.[14]

The typographical system used here is easy to explain. What Cummings is trying to achieve (or what he has actually achieved) is clear; but after the initial impact has been dissipated, the achievement does not seem very fundamental. One wonders if the cost is not greater than the return. It cannot be denied, though, that in many of the poems of Cummings there is significance in the way the words are placed on the page, for the appeal to the eye exists in order to make an appeal to the ear and thus to the mind. The whole system, of course, is pointed

[14] E. E. Cummings, *Collected Poems* (New York, 1938), Poem 115.

towards meaning. The poem given below looks as if the author had picked up a handful of printed words and tossed them on a piece of white paper on his desk. Actually the words have been very carefully arranged according to certain principles of placement, spacing, punctuation, and especially of parenthesis.

O sweet spontaneous
earth how often have
the
doting
fingers of
prurient philosophers pinched
and
poked
thee
,has the naughty thumb
of science prodded
thy
beauty .how
often have religions taken
thee upon their scraggy knees
squeezing and
buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive
gods
(but
true
to the incomparable
couch of death thy
rhythmic
lover
thou answerest

them only with
spring)[15]

This poem must be accepted as Cummings has written it, or rejected completely. It is, of course, possible to accept its ideas and approve of its total impact; yet even in accepting the success of the method used to secure the impact which the poem makes, the critic does not have to agree that this is the only way

[15] ibid. Poem 21.

of securing comparable results. Cummings's contribution to modern poetry is more likely to be found in his handling of words than in his handling of typography.

* * * * *

Along with many twentieth-century poets, Wallace Stevens seems to wish to establish the immediacy of nature, but with Stevens the philosophy behind the wish comes first. Thus, nature in his poems gives the reader the feeling that it is being presented by the keenly observant city cousin who spends vacations in the country. He knows and approves of nature, but he never becomes a part of it, and it never becomes a part of him. Stevens seldom gets closer to his natural materials than in *The Snow Man.*

> One must have a mind of winter
> To regard the frost and the boughs
> Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;
>
> And have been cold a long time
> To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
> The spruces rough in the distant glitter
>
> Of the January sun; and not to think
> Of the misery in the sound of the wind,
> In the sound of a few leaves,
>
> Which is the sound of the land
> Full of the same wind
> That is blowing in the same bare place
>
> For the listener, who listens in the snow,
> And, nothing himself, beholds
> Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.[16]

That we may see quickly what Stevens is doing in this successful and fine poem, one could probably not do better than place beside it for comparison a snow poem built upon totally different principles, a poem called *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.*

[16] Wallace Stevens, *Harmonium* (New York), 1950 p. 16-17.

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.[17]

Structurally, these poems start from opposite positions. *The Snow Man* uses an intellectual structure; *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* uses a natural structure. For the author of the first it is the statements—one must have a particular type of mind and must have a special type of experience—that hold together the natural details. The first author is not creating a particular scene: in fact he is going in the direction of the Imagists, but much more he is following the Symbolists in using the language of implication. Conversely, the author of the second poem has created a particular scene: his poem can be read for its description and rhythm, and nothing more. In the first poem, the reader feels immediately that he is encountering a symbol, even though he may not be sure of its boundaries; in the second poem the reader reacts first to the landscape, especially the images of sight and sound, and only gradually becomes aware of the presence of a symbolic rather than a literal meaning.

There seems no reason to doubt that Stevens believes in the importance of the physical world, and that he believes in the

[17] Robert Frost, *Complete Poems* (New York, 1949), p. 275.

need of the physical world in poetry. Yet the emphasis that Stevens gives to the physical in his poetry is probably based upon his belief in the significance of the unthinking source. Paradoxically, however, he has come to his belief in the importance of the unthinking source by a most strenuous rational process, though he himself came to distrust rationality as a complete guide. Earlier he had followed a similar pattern in his attempts to establish, for himself first, the nature of the imagination and the relation that it holds to reality.

Undoubtedly the thing to remember about Wallace Stevens is that he has written his best poems when he was more concerned with his images than with his abstractions, at least while he was writing. If properly made, the images will represent the ideas.

* * * * *

While Dylan Thomas was still playing with building blocks and had not yet thought of playing with words, Hart Crane was passionately experimenting with the limits to which words could be pushed before the utterly new combinations broke under the strain. After an intensely tragic life, Crane died young—without having succeeded with what was to be his great poem, *The Bridge*. Yet Crane left some dozen shorter poems, the diction of which (among other qualities) was at the time something that had not existed in principle in English poetry for at least two centuries.

One good place to begin a study of Crane's diction is in the poem which he called *At Melville's Tomb*.

> Often beneath the wave, wide from this ledge
> The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath
> An embassy. Their numbers as he watched
> Beat on the dusty shore and were obscured.
>
> And wrecks passed without sound of bells,
> The calyx of death's bounty giving back
> A scattered chapter, livid hieroglyph,
> The portent wound in corridors of shells.
>
> Then in the circuit calm of one vast coil,
> Its lashings charmed and malice reconciled,

Frosted eyes there were that lifted altars;
And silent answers crept across the stars.

Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive
No farther tides . . . High in the azure steeps
Monody shall not wake the mariner.
This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps.[18]

Here the significant point is not that Crane has employed unusual words but that he has used common words in unusual combinations and (what is much more important) he has used words in contexts which force from them implications not to be found in any dictionary. Examples are "The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath/An embassy." "Frosted eyes there were that lifted altars;" and "Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive no farther tides."

Crane's use of words, one soon notices, in various ways parallels the French poets who were so important to him, as they were to Eliot, Pound, Stevens, and many others. Often Crane's images act like those of Mallarmé, and his oblique projection of theme reminds one of Rimbaud.

Perhaps the most perfect control over his medium that Crane reached was in the poems at the end of *White Buildings* (1926). Six of these poems are gathered under the title *Voyages*. If we were here attempting analysis and interpretation, it would be necessary to read all six; but as I am trying to do no more than illustrate one aspect of Crane's use of language, a single poem will be sufficient.

And yet this great wink of eternity,
Of rimless floods, unfettered leewardings,
Samite sheeted and processioned where
Her undinal vast belly moonward bends,
Laughing the wrapt inflections of our love;

Take this Sea, whose diapason knells
On scrolls of silver snowy sentences,
The sceptred terror of whose sessions rends
As her demeanors motion well or ill,
All but the pieties of lovers' hands.

[18] Hart Crane, *Collected Poems* (New York, 1933), p. 100.

And onward, as bells off San Salvador
Salute the crocus lustres of the stars,
In these poinsettia meadows of her tides,—
Adagios of islands, O my Prodigal,
Complete the dark confessions her veins spell.

Mark how her turning shoulders wind the hours,
And hasten while her penniless rich palms
Pass superscription of bent foam and wave,—
Hasten, while they are true,—sleep, death, desire,
Close round one instant in one floating flower.

Bind us in time, O Seasons clear, and awe.
O minstrel galleons of Carib fire,
Bequeath us to no earthly shore until
Is answered in the vortex of our grave
The seal's wide spindrift gaze toward paradise.[19]

Hart Crane lies beneath the waves of the southern seas about which he wrote many of his best poems, but the poems have achieved something of that immortality towards which the author struggled.

* * * * *

Each of the men mentioned here experimented in more ways than the one named. The one way assigned to each has not been presented as his most important experiment. All that can be claimed is that by showing each poet doing something different, evidence of reasonable breadth has been established.

One of the principal implications of this paper is that in their experiments the American poets of this period were not isolated from the writers of England or the Continent. Perhaps never before has the Western World been so intensely unified as through the experiments of the poets of the twentieth century. The differences which divide them spring from other sources, for the final quality which distinguishes one significant poet from another is that inner originality which transcends ultimate isolation and identification. Experiment uses this originality. The originality itself is an element not created by man.

[19] ibid. p. 102-103.

NADINE GORDIMER: THE TRANSPARENT EGO

LIONEL ABRAHAMS

ELEVEN or twelve years ago—far back enough for one not to be unduly fanciful in describing it as her literary début—Nadine Gordimer won a short story competition conducted by The *South African Opinion*. When the judges made their decision known the magazine's literary editor, Herman Bosman, telephoned to her home in Springs. Her mother took the call: Nadine was out, at the hairdresser's. Bosman took the hairdresser's number and telephoned there. So it happened that Nadine Gordimer came out from under a hair drier in order to hear this news.

The story bears telling because what it represents is importantly characteristic: Nadine Gordimer carrying on with the ordinary business of womanhood, while in the wide world her work commands excited attention.

The acclaim she has won can hardly have been paralleled for distinction and volume by that accorded to any other South African author. A consequence of this is that her writing is a source of income and she is able to make it her regular occupation. Her masterly prose bespeaks her art as a vocation in the religious sense. (Indeed, she tells me she began writing as a child and writing has been the one thing uninterruptedly present throughout her life.) But my impression is that she has made it also her vocation in the workaday sense—the job she carries out as steadily and unspectacularly as if it were just an ordinary business.

At any rate, her pursuit of it falls into place alongside what I call in no irreverent spirit the ordinary business of her womanhood—her functions as a mother and wife. She is Mrs Reinhold Cassirer and has two of her own children and a stepchild. I have watched her making a custard for a baby's supper. I have met her in town when she was taking her little boy to the barber's and the dentist's. It is considerations of the effect upon the children of being brought up in a society dominated by racialistic ideas which may determine the family to settle in another

country a few years hence, although she herself feels particular attachments to this soil.

This integration of the professional and domestic life is part of a pattern of containment. The excitement of Nadine's authorship is contained in her work. To follow the pattern further, her social intercourse is not marked by any vibrant creative overflow. Fresh, authoritative, precise and concrete as her conversation is, generous and thought-provoking as are the things she says, she is not the commanding, transporting, memorable conversationalist one somehow expects (illegitimately, of course) an outstanding writer to be. She has no playfulness, no urgency, no drama, no theorizing, nothing risible, oracular, tentative or lyrical in her conversation. It is all meant, all straightforward and common-sensical. And apart from conversation, there is no marked personal efflorescence from this extremely neat, delicately turned, *petite* young woman. There is no aura, no special air, no pose or gesture.

I am bound to put in here two strokes that will score across the impression I have been sketching. There were, about eight years ago, four or five occasions on which I visited Nadine Gordimer in the company of a close friend of hers and mine with whom she shared particular literary enthusiasms—I remember Rilke, Lorca, Yeats, Virginia Woolf and, especially, Proust. I seemed each time to enter a world of heightened aesthetic meaning, a world in which things inanimate seemed to have fallen anew delicately into place. In truth, a little too delicately for me, *gauche* and ignorant as I was. I was a little intimidated in that world of fragile perfection. It was the world of Proust.

The second thing recalls the conference held some years ago on South African English writing. It was there that an intelligent and sensitive acquaintance of mine saw Nadine Gordimer and was completely overwhelmed by her looks. Days later he told me that he was still haunted by her face.

What lies behind the essential quietness and passivity of mien I have been trying to describe? My guess is a peculiarity in Nadine's make-up which I would describe as a transparency of the ego. It is a quality which I believe also conditions the character of her art to a great extent.

Mrs Millin came to a session of that literary conference and delivered an address from the floor during which she declared: "I am bulk." Nadine did not speak once. (What strong evidence

in support of my case this is: imagine how often the discussion must have touched upon her nearest interests during the three days.) Had it been possible for her to speak in Mrs Millin's vein, I imagine her declaring: "I am light."

Hers is essentially an illuminating intelligence: its central function is to render visible, or be rendered visible by, the physical, social and emotional phenomena of experience. That, and not to impress upon the world the shape or even the lantern-slide shadow of a self. As in the case of Toby Hood, the narrator in her novel, *A World of Strangers* (whom I see as Nadine's portrait of the writer as a young man), the slide of her ego is almost blank. Toby has no commitments, no prejudices or illusions, no passionate convictions, no abiding desires: there is hardly more to him than his intelligence, quiet curiosity and readiness to partake. He is not a hero, directing, acting upon life, but a spectator, who is acted upon.

It is this that in my view accounts for the weakness of this novel despite its brilliant ideas and splendid writing, for Toby is the only link in the plot between various parts of the book. As a result it is something of a satirical social travelogue of Johannesburg. It lacks an emotional structure.

In Nadine Gordimer's case the more or less expunged ego is a source of powers and limitations. The magic lantern becomes a searchlight—one with x-ray properties. You do not get fantasies, romances, metaphysical projections, jokes or *bobba meises* in her writings. Their substance is phenomena, facts, things as they are. For accuracy, minuteness and sensitivity I do not think her recording of experience is surpassed in modern literature: I cannot see how it could be improved on. The richness which makes art of this recording is largely the result of her comments in which she groups and compares particles of experience. The drama which makes fiction of this art is hardly ever the result of action—a movement through time—but usually the result of a penetration through emotional space—the poignant revelation of "the reality behind the reality" (to adapt a phrase of Uys Krige's).

Mention of the lack of movement through time (the concern with the states rather than the processes of experience) brings me face to face with a paradox. Notwithstanding what I have said about the transparency of Nadine Gordimer's ego, it is also true that she is present in her own guise, or in that of a

narrator who is not a 'character', just about constantly in all her writings. Every incident or part of an incident in the narrative is hedged about with comments, explanations, the adjustments of getting the facts into focus. The result is that the flow of time is frozen and shattered into the moments which are peculiarly this writer's *métier*. That is why she is best at short stories. And at this stage of her development plays are completely beyond her range, as she said during her enthusiastic commendation of *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll:* that was the sort of play she would write, she felt, if she could manage the form.

To go still further in contradiction of my 'transparent ego' idea, this constant overt presence of the writer in the writings results in the more or less overt communication of the writer's attitudes to her subjects. Let me be sweeping: broadly Nadine Gordimer's work expresses two mutually contradictory attitudes to life: compassion and cynicism. There is a rough division according to time. In her earlier stories, collected as *The Soft Voice of the Serpent*, and her first novel, *The Lying Days*, compassion predominates. But some of the stories in *Six Feet of the Country*, and many parts of *A World of Strangers* set my teeth on edge with their unlaughing satire. The more important division is according to subject-matter. Toby Hood says: "I hate the faces of peasants," but it is for the equivalent of peasants in Nadine Gordimer's world that she has expressed her compassion: the immigrant Mr and Mrs Chaitowitz in her magnificent story *The Defeated*, the old derelict, van As, in *The Last Kiss*. Generally the people with whom she can more readily identify herself socially bring out her cynicism.

To this extent Nadine Gordimer seems to be emotionally wielded, that is, she regards her characters with a sort of automatic sympathy or antipathy according merely to the socio-economic classes to which they belong. To disprove the romantic notion of the artist's dependence on 'experience' she once cited the case of Jane Austen who managed so admirably without 'experience'. But precisely where Miss Gordimer is constrained Jane Austen is free—free to make us respond to things according to the needs of her artistic concepts, instead of being committed to either patience or scorn according to mere external categories. Miss Gordimer, on the other hand, is either warmed or chilled, sweetened or soured, opened or closed, by whatever scene she confronts, before her imagination can begin

to come to grips with it. And since the subjects that elicit the best in her seem to be those she encounters some distance out of the way of her daily life, she has something like a duty to do a kind of adventuring, a hunting of 'experience'. (Questions about the value of 'experience' are, indeed, implicit in several of her newer stories, *A Style of Her Own*, for example, and more pertinently, *The Gentle Art*, which tells of two women, one of whom enthusiastically accompanies the men on a crocodile hunt while the other is content to wait in camp for their return, to the complete mystification of the first.)

There are some signs in *Friday's Footprint*, Miss Gordimer's newest volume (which includes 'A Style of Her Own,' 'The Gentle Art' and 'The Last Kiss'), that she may be drawing herself free from the emotional wielding I have described. In the longest piece, 'An Image of Success', she approaches as near as she ever has to tragedy: at least she provides the first prerequisite of tragedy, a hero who elicits admiration (however qualified) and sympathy (however mixed). And this Mr Butters is by no means of the 'peasantry.'

That hair drier I mentioned at the start—its shape also is significant: reminiscent as it is of a cocoon. The other day Nadine and I chatted a good bit about the idea of being closed in, and about cocoons. Someone growing up in a country like this had a whole series of cocoons to break out of, she said: cultural, racial and so on. She herself had broken out of the cultural cocoon relatively early, forced to it by another sort of confinement: that due to her years of seclusion in childhood and early adolescence, during which her energies turned to "the exploration of self." (Interestingly, she explained that by this phrase she did not mean "contemplating the navel" but reading, listening to music, and so on.)

As I see it, those years of removal from much of the rough-and-tumble of ordinary contacts with the resultant blunting and vulgarization of perception, accounts largely for the sensitivity, keenness and fastidiousness of Nadine's literary eye. She remarked that the ways of seeing we acquire in our youth remain with us always.

What of cocoons to-day? *A World of Strangers* and much of *Six Feet of the Country* give me the impression of emanating from inside a social cocoon. There are very important glimpses of the faces of peasants through the chrysalis wall, but chiefly

we have an exposé of the futility, narrowness and selfishness of fashionable people. Is it significant that for the setting of *The Last Kiss*, a recent story, she returned to the East Rand of her youth? Is it that she feels that for what she has to express, the aspects of contemporary Johannesburg life she has been exploiting have become effete—that the cocoon is outgrown? Are we going soon to see an even more startling emergence than we have seen so far? I believe it is likely.

But this important change which seems to be in process does not mean that Nadine Gordimer will have done with cocoons. That, I fancy, will not come yet a while, if ever. Another story in *Friday's Footprint*, called 'Check Yes or No,' makes a curiously direct acknowledgement of the ineluctability of the cocoon. In the striking final passage the protagonist makes a crucial identification between herself and a circus performer who walks a tight-wire completely enclosed in a bag. If I am not quite wrong to add so personal a dimension to the meaning of this symbolism, I am still unable to suggest precisely what form of limitation it is that Miss Gordimer is here, temporarily at least, resigning herself to. I only feel sure that it is not the same grave shortcoming that showed so clearly in *A World of Strangers* and *Six Feet of the Country*. For recognizing herself in the perilously enclosed artiste restores to Phoebe van der Camp her human balance, and suddenly she is able to extend sympathy to both the peasant-like stranger on one side of her, and her husband—essentially, eminently presentable, for all his having humiliatingly faltered—on the other.

I have not had space to comment on Nadine's lively interest in contemporary affairs, on her liberal views and on the other manifestations of her generosity from which I have several times benefited. It must suffice to note that a cocoon is not an ivory tower.

PATON'S LATE PHALAROPE

SHERIDAN BAKER

TOO LATE THE PHALAROPE invites us to think of Alan Paton more simply as a novelist than as a kind of Christian plenipotentiary to South Africa. Not that *Cry, the Beloved Country* is a religious tract, or natural accident—but the literary qualities of the first book, which seem to have sprung from the very ground,[1] seem in the second imported. Though *Too Late the Phalarope* is no patchwork, its relative limitations can be detected, I think, squarely in the midst of its new 'literary' features.

Similarity to Paton's first book only emphasizes the defects. Again the language represents an alien speech—in this case not Zulu but Afrikaans—enriched and shaped by the Bible (and the differing renditions, which show that the Bible has chiefly strengthened the Zulu's symbolism and the Afrikaner's rhetoric, demonstrate Paton's gift of tongues). Again the language embodies the book's ethos: simple Christianity *versus* the Calvinistic conviction that the Afrikaners are Africa's elect, chosen to remain separate. Again a preacher defines the conflict. In the morning sermon the father hears of God's mercy, and in the evening of man's obedience—"a word he understood, better than he understood the word of love."[2] And the words are Afrikaans, which, to the father, "was a holy tongue, given by God in the wilderness."[3] Again Paton has illustrated the general wrong of the world (the failure of love) and the particular wrong of Africa (the antagonism of black and white) in terms of father and son. Again a bird—in fact, two—is symbolic. The bird-cry of the first book recurs in the second,[4] and the phalarope, like affection between father and son, visits the van Vlaanderen's beloved country shyly and too late.

Paton's symbology and psychology seem sound enough. A big and autocratic father may in effect emasculate the son, may

[1] Sheridan Baker, 'Paton's Beloved Country and the Morality of Geography,' *College English* XIX (1957), p. 56-61.
[2] *Too Late the Phalarope* (Cape Town, 1953), p. 80.
[3] ibid. p. 80.
[4] ibid. p. 48, 195.

make him half girl and half athlete. A timid wife may disappoint him. His need to prove himself a man may lead him to excel on the rugby field and in the police force, and to engage in the most primitive and dangerous sexual game available. And sexual intercourse with a black girl, at the very time that it enables the son to feel himself his father's equal in potency, has the further advantage of ultimate disobedience, of punishing the father at the cruellest extremity, and of caricaturing, as it were, the white domination of black for which he stands. But something is missing, and the earliest symptoms appear in the very technique.

To be sure, there are literary gains—in new territory, in plotting, in Paton's wonderful study of guilt—but we soon sense something vaguely familiar and slightly gratuitous. Jakob van Vlaanderen, for instance, has a game leg, the result of an accident. While it helps set his stiff character, is it really functional? One remembers the gouty patriarchs of English fiction and even, guiltily, *The Katzenjammer Kids*. And any viewer of TV will recognize the conventional stage business in the following:

> He took a step or two, then without turning called to his son; and for some reason I cannot give, that was a habit of his, to start to leave a room, and then to stop, and to talk with his back turned.
> —Pieter, have you ever seen the phalarope?
> —The what, father?
> —The phalarope. [5]

Naturally Paton wanted to underline his symbol, as he brings it in here for the first time. But his significant moment seems to have inspired what looks distressingly like a second-rate theatrical—the pause without turning, then the laden speech.

The dramatics have been uncertain, however, from the first. Aunt Sophie's incantatory words open the story. She herself is writing it down, she says. We turn then to Chapter II and find:

> The lieutenant was in Pretorius Street, in the shadow of the tall gum trees, when he heard the sound of bare feet running.

The tense scene and spare language continue. We are imme-

[5] ibid. p. 110.

diately and vividly *there*. Aunt Sophie is nowhere, completely out of sight and mind, and when she again materializes three pages later, with an "our" and an "I" and a sound of gossip in the air, the effect is a little startling. One cannot easily concede the maiden aunt such literary powers. And though Paton does some fine things with Aunt Sophie, when she reports what she herself has seen—the birthday party, the group talking after church—competition between Paton and Aunt Sophie as story-teller repeatedly breaks the illusion. For instance, we get thoughts and actions (the captain's) which neither Sophie nor her nephew, the lieutenant, could have known; we have the odd experience, sitting in the lieutenant's chair, of talking with *Tante* Sophie, our observation centre and listening post, unseen and distant at the other end of the wire. And after Sophie tells us the conversation ("I said," "he said"), after Lieutenant Pieter has shut her off, there she still is (or, rather, *isn't*), inside the lieutenant's office and the lieutenant's head.[6] Again, Sophie can write, "The two men left us . . . and drove away to the pan,"[7] and yet take us right along with them.

Sophie is too clearly, for all her substance, a literary device, and a rather old-fashioned one at that. She is the Nelly Dean of *Wuthering Heights*, thinned down, brought into the family, and coloured up with Rosa Dartle. Like Nelly, she is the spirit brooding over others' children, watching them grow and suffer, a kind of associate Mother Nature on the sidelines, who provides the long view, the ultimate healing. Like Rosa Dartle, she is the disfigured spinster who loves the bonny and indifferent scion with a masochistic intensity: Rosa's lip is scarred by Steerforth's rejection; Sophie is harelipped, and the nephew torments her by telling her he doesn't like being kissed "like that" when she finally has him in her arms again "with all the passion of a hungry woman."[8] As with the father's leg, all this works well enough, but a little stiffly; it all seems discreetly tacked on, not really extruded from the material itself.

Paton brings Sophie a long way into reality, but he cannot make her narrative mechanics natural. Moreover, he sees the problem. Aunt Sophie says at the start that she has not observed everything; that, being sensitive and solitary, she has extraordinary powers of insight, and that she has had reports from

[6] ibid. p. 43-47.
[7] ibid. p. 201.
[8] ibid. p. 99.

others and especially from Pieter's "secret book." But still she vanishes the instant Paton launches a scene where she is not present. Emily Bronte chose a character who always *is* present, or who reports only what she hears as she hears it. And though Mr Lockwood's diary, the record of Nelly Dean's gossip, gives way to direct listening for quite a while, though Nelly fills in a rather long episode in the words of her fellow servant Zillah, Nelly's realism—the authenticating reality for this fantastic tale, as several have remarked—derives chiefly from her realistic telling of only those things she would have known as a servant in those times and at those places.

Aunt Sophie, on the other hand, is recreating incidents and states of mind from Pieter's "secret book." And the result is often implausible, if not embarrassing, something Paton is not seeing all the way around. Would the maiden aunt, no matter what her secret yearnings, go, with quite this saintly candour, into the details of sexual intercourse before the fire? And when Aunt Sophie transcribes passages directly from the secret book, the effect is hardly better. Would the man himself, writing a confessional diary for his wife, speak of her in the third person and recreate, as if he were writing a novel, scenes in which she herself was involved? Presumably Paton gives us all of his hero's significant life: we hear of his going home, looking at stamps and books, fussing about alone. But we never hear of his sitting down to the hours of soul-searching composition such a document would take. Does he write a new episode after each transgression? Is he living his life—as Fielding accuses Cibber of doing—just so he may write it? Most readers, I think, will cry "unfair" when Pieter pulls his sooty book out of the chimney in the penultimate chapter.

Why does Paton use Aunt Sophie at all? The first reason, I think, is that he wanted an authentic Afrikaner 'voice.' Sophie says that she writes, in the last analysis, in obedience to a voice: "I also remember the voice that came to John in Patmos, saying, what thou seest, write it in a book, and though I do not dare to claim a knowledge of this voice, yet I do dare to claim a knowledge of some voice. Therefore I put aside my fears, and am obedient."[9] It seems clear that Paton himself heard a voice in *Cry, the Beloved Country:* "There is a lovely

[9] ibid. p. 10.

road that runs from Ixopo into the hills," he wrote, and the pencil apparently kept on moving to some inner dictation. But in the first book it was the voice of Africa, heard while Paton was lonely in Sweden, the bird-note that stirs deep mysteries for him.

No doubt there is also a strong measure of the sacred and the personal in the Afrikaans language for Paton: he certainly endows Sophie with the non-Boer humanitarianism and holy charity of his friend and hero Jan Hofmeyr.[10] But Afrikaans is also the voice of repression, of Paton's political enemies. It is not the very voice of Africa; it is not so familiar; it is more local and provincial, more distant from him even than Zulu or Xhosa (he has moved his interests from his native Natal over into the Transvaal); he associates it with a "character"—and he is immediately involved in a problem of literary tactics quite contrary to his natural bent. In *Cry, the Beloved Country* he could interpose pieces of talk, black and white, of documents and of anguished apostrophe, without shifting key, and the observing consciousness could hover over anything pertinent. In *Too Late the Phalarope* Paton must limit that consciousness to one woman, who can utter the apostrophes and prayers, but who cannot always stay on the scene.

I think the basic reason for Aunt Sophie, however, is Paton's inability to handle one of his central symbols: sexual union with a black girl. It seems, from the book itself, that he cannot quite imagine such a thing. Sophie enables him to stop short. She can approach this black nocturnal love among the stinking *kakiebos* weeds only with genuine distaste, and the briefest euphemism. The legitimate white love by firelight she can quite naturally approve, though she would hardly visualize it, I think, let alone describe it, any more than she would the black. It is exactly here that Paton gives himself away: one he cannot do, the other he does almost as if to prove that he can if he wants to. Aunt Sophie as a believable person is lost; but worse, Paton himself stands uncertain between his blacks and whites. The firelit scene is too persuasive to keep us convinced of the lieutenant's marital dissatisfaction. It does make us physically aware of his twisted evaluation, of what he is throwing away. But we get very little of the physical horror the contrast implies

[10] See American edition of *Too Late the Phalarope* (Scribner's, 1953), p. xii-xiii.

—which might have been written in by another man with no Aunt Sophie—because, though the white girl is there in the firelight, the black girl is simply not there in the dark at all.

Almost the whole of the problem concerning Stephanie, the black girl, remains outside the reality of the book. After a passage of Paton at his best—a lyrical run into the heartland, talk with an old native who needlessly adjusts an old army coat, small black boys sitting and talking about him—we suddenly find ourselves right in broad day-dream. Stephanie has become a nymph: " . . . the path suddenly turned, and in a moment he was in the bush, where the *singsingetjie*, the shrill cicada, made its piercing song in the coolness. Here was what lay in the store of memory, the water running over the stones and the sharp-tasting water plants and the mosses and ferns. Then suddenly ahead of him, under a little fall of water, he saw the girl Stephanie."[11]

Now, this is a rather universal fancy, as E. B. White has remarked in speaking of Dorothy Lamour: "Man's most persistent dream is of a forest pool and a girl coming out of it unashamed, walking toward him with a wavy motion, childlike in her wonder . . ."[12] But Paton cannot reconcile with his realistic tragedy this nymph of day-dream, even by treating her realistically in other scenes. Stephanie in the glade is not quite Stephanie in the street, saluting the *baas* with palm facing outwards and walking off with a little dance to her step.

Toward the end of the book, Paton seems to be trying to negotiate differences by making Pieter a kind of unfortunate satyr: "For he was like a man who had lived famous by some legend, that underneath his clothes he was not like other men, but had the parts of a god; but some enemy had made him drunken, and stripped him and left him in the streets for men's derision."[13] Paton, apparently, wants Stephanie nymphlike to excuse Pieter's temptation, and goes so far as almost to obliterate the problem of evil altogether. Stephanie under the waterfall is the very epitome of the evanescent world of nature. Several times Paton mentions her "queer look of innocence"[14] and her "strange secret smile;"[15] she is "a strange creature."[16] And

[11] *Too Late the Phalarope* (Cape Town, 1953), p. 53.
[12] *The Second Tree from the Corner* (New York, 1954), p. 108.
[13] *Too Late the Phalarope* (Cape Town, 1953), p. 244.
[14] ibid. p. 14.
[15] ibid. p. 53-54.
[16] ibid. p. 14.

just before finding her retreat, we ride through what we recognize as the beloved country:

> . . . for in the rain you could hear the plovers calling, and the *piet-my-vrou* would cry from the kloof, which was like a hand suddenly plucking at the strings of the heart, so that your whole being shook and trembled; and why and why, why no one knew, it was the nature of man and of creation, that some sound, long remembered from the days of innocence before the world's corruption, could open the door of the soul, flooding it with a sudden knowledge of the sadness and terror and beauty of man's home and the earth.[17]

Paton associates Stephanie rather closely, then, with the bird-cry of all natural goodness in this transitory life, which "you could not hold . . . in your hand like a flower or a book."[18] She also represents that tender side of Pieter ("a passion for books"—"a girl with a flower")[19] which causes the antagonism and the tragedy. Somehow this shy bird of the native homeland is like the phalarope, which represents the missing tenderness between father and son.

But the design doesn't quite trace out, for Stephanie also represents the destructive anger Pieter's father stirs in him: "the black mood, the *swartgalligheid*, came and lay with him."[20] She graphically represents the black evil of Dutch authoritarianism, the black depths into which Pieter throws himself to pay back his father. Paton has not reconciled her two opposite meanings. He could have shown the union as good and natural in definace of a repressive code, and written the openly romantic book he flirts with by the waterfall; or he could have made Stephanie convincingly attractive in her wickedness rather than in her innocence. He tries both, though in fact he seems to avoid the problem by giving Stephanie as little space as possible, and consequently Pieter's motives remain, at least for me, unconvincingly mixed and dimly realized: Paton's double view of Stephanie does not successfully transpose into a split personality for Pieter; the father's rigidity and the wife's frigidity are blamed at random and by turns; Stephanie's final treachery comes as a surprise, rather vaguely written off as primitive truculence; and Aunt Sophie, who, I think was

[17] ibid. p. 48.
[18] ibid. p. 48.
[19] ibid. p. 8.
[20] ibid. p. 187, 189.

supposed to have covered everything, comes in for a soap-opera finish, running down the street with the captain to intercept the lethal pistol and hearing, gravely and at last, that she is a lovely woman.

No, sex is not Paton's subject. It has no deep and pervasive meaning for him as it does for, let us say, Lawrence. The agonizing need for love in a black-and-white world turns embarrassingly thin for him when translated into sexual terms, even implying that all would have been saved if Pieter's wife had just been a shade more aboriginal—which, I think, is not the point intended. Paton's real compassion, his real gift for life and for fiction both, finds in his second book nothing like the complete integration of his first. The story of Stephan Kumalo—to whom 'Stephanie' is a curious and imperfect cognate—could give Paton's private compassion universal meaning; the affairs of Pieter van Vlaanderen all too often turn Paton's compassion sentimental and his creative gift slick. His symbolic bird, the deep humanity he knows and wants to make viable, comes briefly and too late; it is too shy and is really not a native here.

PRINGLE, SOMERSET AND PRESS FREEDOM

A. D. HALL

THOMAS PRINGLE enjoys a place in the South African pantheon not only as the country's first English poet but as its first champion of press freedom. While the fact of his resistance to Lord Charles Somerset's attempts at censorship is generally known, general knowledge is perhaps confined to the bare fact; and the following attempt to re-tell the story has seemed worth making, first, because the details are not readily accessible and second, because the episode has often been inflated. Historians like Walker, MacMillan and Keppel-Jones are not of course guilty of distortion, but their brief accounts omit, as they must to maintain perspective, those very details which give the affair its interest. Extended accounts are given by the historians Theal[1] and Cory,[2] but in these the Pringle narrative is merged with a great deal of other matter from which it deserves, for its own sake, to be disentangled; and, at this date, to be supplemented.

The distortions occur in the brief popular accounts, not excluding that most potent influence on general knowledge, the school history text-book. Since I know my own experience not to be singular, I may recall that I left school equipped with the simple fact about Pringle that he was involved in The Struggle for the Freedom of the Press. I do not recall whether I derived the information from W. C. Scully's *History of South Africa*,[3] but the book will serve as an example. Its short account of the Pringle story is introduced with the heavy-type paragraph-heading, "The Struggle for the Freedom of the Press." The phrase is not magniloquent when used to describe the long slow growth of press freedoms in Britain but, with its suggestions of prolonged resistance against great odds, seems inappropriate to the Cape Town of 1824 with its European population of 5,000 and a press consisting of a monthly magazine (which saw two issues) and a small weekly newspaper with a circulation of under 1,000.

[1] *History of South Africa*, 1795-1828 (London, 1927).
[2] *The Rise of South Africa* (London, 1926), vol. II.
[3] (London, 1915), p. 136.

The temptation to use such a phrase is understandable, arising as it surely does from the desire to see the setting match the principles at stake. This motive would account for Dorothea Fairbridge's writing that "the movement for the liberty of the press . . . was headed by Mr Thomas Pringle and Mr John Fairbairn."[4] The "movement" was not merely "headed" by them but, with the single addition of the printer George Greig, consisted of them. A more recent writer, seeking no less than Miss Fairbridge, and no less laudably, to lay stress on the importance both of civil liberties and of the English contribution in South Africa, writes: "The fight for the freedom of the Press was unleashed;"[5] and says of John Fairbairn, that in 1829 he "had newly emerged in triumph from his fight against enormous odds for a free Press in South Africa."[6]

To suggest that such language is inflationary is not to asperse either the courage or the ideals of those who resisted the Governor's attempts to muzzle freedom of speech and publication. On the contrary, it should help to give those qualities their just emphasis by precluding at the outset any suspicion that this was a storm in a teacup. It was the fact of resistance rather than its outcome that was important, for the probabilities were that, with a change of governor at the Cape and a change of government at Westminster, a proper press law would have come into operation at the Cape at much the time it did even if Pringle had never existed.

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Pringle, in his *Narrative of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope*,[7] has left a long account of the tribulations of the earliest Cape journalists. It is not surprising that historians, referring as they must to this source, have sometimes reflected the prominence which Pringle himself, in his first-person account allowed to his part in these events. Pringle is, at best, *primus inter pares* of those who stood out for press liberty. His friend and fellow-editor, John Fairbairn, and their associate George Greig, the printer, share the stage and the credit. Inasmuch as they fought the fight to its finish in 1828, whereas Pringle

[4] *History of South Africa* (Oxford, 1917), p. 193.
[5] J. Bond, *They Were South Africans* (Cape Town, 1956), p. 130.
[6] ibid. p. 128.
[7] *African Sketches* (London, 1834), Part II.

returned to Britain in 1826, theirs may be the greater credit. Fairbairn, indeed, gave another thirty years to Cape journalism and is the undisputed Father of the South African Press. Others like Mr Bishop Burnett played an important part in obtaining a proper press law by their demands for civil liberties in general. When Burnett laid Settler grievances before the British Parliament he helped turn a bright light on the whole state of affairs at the Cape, including the restrictions on publication.

The Cape itself is not the sole battleground for those freedoms which it demanded and acquired; it is not even the most important one. To speak of liberty of the press or of the individual in South Africa in the early nineteenth century is not to speak of South Africa alone but of Britain and Europe. When the 5000 British settlers landed in 1820 they brought with them British attitudes and assumptions. By importing some of the political ferment of their own country, they introduced a ferment which is in turn a part of the wider European ferment of the time. The Settlers' opposition to Somerset was a continuation of the struggle which they had watched or shared against Lord Charles's spiritual brothers and political masters, the Tory government of Castlereagh and Sidmouth. The Settlers were a means by which Britain and Europe made an impact that thrust the Cape violently from the eighteenth (and in some respects the seventeenth) century into the nineteenth. As far as press freedom is concerned South Africa enjoyed the fruits of Britain's travail: the Pringle-Fairbairn-Greig campaign compressed into five years what had taken at least a century and a half in Britain.

The first round in the fight for liberty of the press had been won in Britain at the end of the seventeenth century, when the Licensing Act was not renewed and it ceased to be necessary to have matter approved prior to publication. Freedom from restraint before publication did not, however, mean freedom after publication, as it never has done. But the nature of those restraints, the framing of laws to express them, and the impartial administration of those laws, constituted a process that extended throughout the eighteenth century in Britain and was not resolved to the general satisfaction until the time of the first Reform Bill in 1832. And the last of the "taxes on knowledge" was not removed until a generation later. It was in the

Reform era that Britain achieved the stability that made a free press possible.

In a state which is not stable and reasonably homogeneous, and where the spirit and traditions of the people do not tolerate differences of opinion, the highest-sounding laws respecting freedom of speech will be dead letters. Governments will prosecute deviationists, the courts will find them guilty, and the people as a whole, from ignorance, intolerance or indifference will not protest. The condition of England in the years after Waterloo—lean troubled years when the danger, not perhaps of revolution but of rebellion, was great—was hardly stable. A wide gulf separated the aristocratic ruling class from the growing mass of unenfranchised urban workers which an industrial revolution had crammed into the towns over the preceding half-century. The clamour for reform was persistent and at times violent, and a frightened government prosecuted viciously, though remarkably inefficiently, the mouthpieces of that clamour. The difference of opinion between the Reformers and the Government about what constituted the already much-vaunted freedom of the press could hardly have been wider. In the earlier years of the century the courts tended to find for the Government. In a case in 1811 in connexion with Leigh Hunt's attack on military flogging, a judge made the following pronouncement: "It is said we have a right to discuss the acts of our legislature. That would be a large permission indeed. Is there . . . to be a power in the people to counteract the acts of Parliament and is the libeller to come and make the people dissatisfied with the Government under which he lives. This is not to be permitted to any man: it is unconstitutional and seditious."[8] Twenty-five years later when the crisis in the nation was past, Lord Chancellor Brougham could tell a parliamentary committee inquiring into the laws of libel that it was his belief that libels abusing the institutions of the country did very little harm and that discussion, however intemperate, was not to be feared. Stability had come, and with it the luxury of affording dissent.

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[8] Quoted in W. H. Wickwar, *The Struggle for the Freedom of the Press* (London, 1928), p. 27.

In 1820 when Thomas Pringle went out to the Cape,the battle over the press in Britain was still raging; and though victory was in sight, in the sense that responsible newspapers were well established in their right to comment vigorously on public issues, there were still sufficient libel prosecutions by an insecure government to make the issue of a free press a lively one, and to cause journalists to strike militant attitudes should press freedoms appear to be menaced by authority.

The Governor at the Cape, General Lord Charles Henry Somerset, was an authoritarian who provoked militant attitudes by the very expression of his face. (Pringle found him a master of the insolent sneer.) When the Settlers arrived to disturb the Governor's calm, Lord Charles had just completed six years at the Cape under conditions which suited his temperament and training. The Dutch colonists, inured as they were to the despotism and corrupt officialdom of the recently-defunct Dutch East India Company, did not burden the Governor with censure or suggestion. They did not agitate for representative assemblies or the rights of man. They had other outlets. They could always, like Huckleberry Finn, "light out for the territory" which stretched away endlessly on their doorstep. Lord Charles was possibly more acceptable than anything they had been accustomed to treat as the natural order of government. Even at the end of his career, when his reputation was in tatters and he stood in danger of impeachment before the House of Commons, many of the old colonists were prepared to testify, in memorial and petition, that his had been a most beneficent rule.

Not that Lord Charles was indifferent to the welfare of the colony; but, like any old-fashioned paternalistic aristocrat, he preferred the initiative to come from himself. One might seek favours of him but not demand rights. It was not his task to conciliate but to be conciliated. When he first landed in Cape Town, the story goes, he was driven from the jetty to his future residence. As the carriage stopped at the door he asked what the building was. "This is Government House, Your Excellency." "Government House! Damme, I took it for a dog kennel." A scandalous proportion of the colonial revenue went subsequently to ensure that he did not live in a dog kennel, for Lord Charles had a full sense of his worth and station. For instance, he cannot have doubted who was the principal beneficiary, himself or South Africa, when he condescended to

confer his family's names and titles on: the towns and district of Somerset; the town, district and port, all named Beaufort; on the town and district of Worcester; on Port Frances (subsequently Port Alfred). Perhaps he thought it a normal perquisite of his birth and position to manipulate Cape military appointments and frontier policy so as to provide suitable employment and promotion for his eldest son. It was the business of the lower orders to be grateful for any signs of benevolence in their betters. Lord Charles, in short, was a familiar human type, unique neither in time and place; and it was unfortunate, and even a little sad, that the march of mind and events should have overtaken him and turned him into an anachronism[9]—the close of his career clouded by what he might have called, had the phrase then been handy, 'unassimilable elements'.

Thomas Pringle, as one might expect, was Lord Charles's opposite in many important respects. He was the son of a Scottish farmer, Lord Charles was the son of an English Duke; Pringle was an ardent Presbyterian, Lord Charles a High Churchman; Lord Charles was a Tory, Pringle—if not the "inveterate Radical" that Lord Charles called him—was a liberal humanitarian of the new school; Lord Charles was in his crusty middle 'fifties, the product of the eighteenth century; Pringle was in his early 'thirties—he was born in what Lord Charles may have noted as the ominous and detestable year, 1789—and was the child of the revolutionary age; Lord Charles was a soldier and a man of wealth; Pringle was poor and a writer; if the face is the map of the soul Lord Charles proclaimed his in a domineering cast of countenance; Pringle, according to a friend, had an expression of "mingled sweetness and sagacity."[10]

Pringle came to South Africa as the leader of a party of settlers. He himself did not intend to tame the wilderness, but planned to find civil service employment. He was the only one of six brothers who did not follow their father into farming. After a university education he worked for twelve years in the

[9] Lord Charles was not the only member of his family to become outmoded. A younger brother, who, as Lord Raglan, commanded the British forces in the Crimea, was relieved of his command after his incompetence had been exposed by the press.

[10] Leitch Ritchie, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Pringle, With a Sketch of his Life* (London, 1839), p. cxxxii.

Public Records Office in Edinburgh, during which period he helped to found and edit *Blackwood's Magazine* and became an editor of *Constable's Magazine*. His writings had early attracted the favourable attention of, among others, Sir Walter Scott; and later of S. T. Coleridge, who wrote of his *Afar in the Desert* that it was "among the two or three most perfect lyric poems in our language"—though posterity has concluded that Coleridge's crystal ball was clouded on this occasion. It was through the interest exerted by Sir Walter Scott in Downing Street that Pringle was able to go from the settlement on the Baviaan's River to take up the post of librarian in the newly-opened South African Public Library in Cape Town in September, 1822.

For the first weeks after his arrival in Cape Town, Pringle was filled with the highest hopes. Perhaps the Western Province, after two years in the Bedford district, followed by six weeks in the Karoo in an ox-wagon, would make any man optimistic. The Governor seemed to him a man of liberal sentiments. Had he not declared himself opposed to slavery and published his sentiments in a proclamation, and had not a white man been executed for the first time in the Colony's history for the murder of a slave? Pringle was also buoyed up by hints that he might be able to supplement his £75 a year as librarian by superintending the *Government Gazette*, the official organ and only printed publication in the colony. He had giddy fancies of turning this into a torch of knowledge—an ambition which had plenty of scope if we may judge by the sober report of the Commissioners who described the Gazette as characterized by a "total absence of all interest" and as "scarcely referred to by any class of the Inhabitants."

It was in this optimistic mood that he wrote to his close friend, John Fairbairn, inviting him to come out from Britain and share in the toils and honours which seemed to lie so richly in store. Fairbairn's response was as eager as Pringle could have hoped. He wrote back outlining a dozen schemes for the intellectual elevation of the colony, and saw nothing to prevent the two of them from going down in history as the Benjamin Franklins of the Cape.

It was almost a year before Fairbairn arrived and in the meantime the golden prospects turned rapidly to lead. Pringle came to suspect that the liberal gestures of the Governor were meant

to delude the two Commissioners of Inquiry who, now daily expected, had been appointed to examine affairs at the Cape, in consequence of profound dissatisfactions among the new settlers. The settlers, forbidden by Lord Charles to hold meetings to discuss their grievances, had eventually resorted to the more effective and (to the Governor) more damaging expedient of petitioning the Home Government.

His rapid disillusionment diverted Pringle from relying on Government patronage, and sent him in search of other means of adding to his income. He set up as tutor and took in a few boys. At the same time he met in the Rev. Mr Faure of the Dutch Reformed Church a kindred spirit, and they formed the design of publishing a monthly journal in English and Dutch. But before they had even devised a prospectus the Governor's informers had told him of the plan (which there had been no attempt to conceal) and Lord Charles despatched a functionary to Pringle to insinuate that such an enterprise would be detrimental to his personal interests in the colony. To one better versed in local ways this would have been sufficient, for, as some Dutch friends told Pringle, the Governor's power was "absolute and his resentment ruin." But Pringle disdained the advice, and he and Faure submitted a formal request to be allowed to publish a journal. It was five weeks before they received any reply whatever. When it came it was verbal, conveyed by the Secretary to the Government, Col. Bird: "His Excellency has not seen your application in a favourable light."[11] It was a response, wrote Pringle later, altogether too "Grand Seignior," and he was all for forcing the issue. But Col. Bird, speaking as a friend and speaking with knowledge (he himself was suffering under the Governor's enmity, which was later to end in his dismissal from the service) managed to convince Pringle of the futility of further action. Pringle decided to wait for better times. He rejected the remaining course open to him of appeal to the Home Government, since this would put him in a position of declared hostility to the Governor. Besides, much was to be hoped from the Commissioners of Inquiry.

He could have spared his caution about declared hostility. The moment Lord Charles received the Pringle-Faure petition,

[11] T. Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 314.

he wrote privately to Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, informing him that a certain "arrant dissenter . . . who had scribbled for a magazine in Edinburgh" had applied to start a paper, and advising strongly against it.[12] Lord Charles was sufficiently in touch with the times to feel uneasy about the situation; he temporized instead of laying a despotic interdict upon Pringle's proposal, and took care to keep the matter out of the official correspondence. Until he had firm instructions from England, and from the Liverpool Government he might hope for instructions after his own heart, he would fob off petitioners with hints, threats and delays.

The Governor had barely brought the fire under control in one quarter than it broke out in another. Pringle was for the moment silenced, but his side was reinforced by the arrival in the following month, March, 1823, of the printer, George Greig. And higher powers seemed to be rallying to the cause. The type that Greig lacked (he had brought most of his materials with him from London) was providentially supplied him. A paper in India had been ordered to cease publication and some type which had been purchased for it was stopped at Cape Town and put up for sale. It was acquired by George Greig.

Greig applied for permission to start a weekly newspaper. It was to be a trade and commercial journal, with its principal matter shipping news, rate of exchange, and advertisements. He hoped to publish matters of general interest though "rigidly excluding all personal controversy" and all discussion of the policy and administration of the Colonial government.[13]

Such modesty and restraint availed him nothing. After five weeks (as in Pringle's case) the Governor replied that "having had *numerous applications* to the same purport, . . . [he would] feel himself bound to consider the interests of prior applicants whenever a Printing Press shall be established in the colony."[14] This was pure and not very ingenious fabrication—as it cannot have cost the petitioner much effort to discover in the Cape Town of those days: the only other request had been that from Pringle and Faure.

[12] G. M. Theal, ed., *Records of the Cape Colony* (London, 1897-1905), vol. XV, p. 267.
[13] ibid. vol. XVI, pp. 161-3.
[14] L. H. Meurant, *Sixty Years Ago* (Cape Town, 1885), p. 17.

The months dragged out. A public petition for a free press was presented to the Commissioners of Inquiry when they arrived in July, 1823, but they lacked power to act, and advised patience. At last, on December 2, ten months after making his request to the Governor, Pringle was sent for, to be informed by Lord Charles "with obvious reluctance and a very ill-grace" that Earl Bathurst had been pleased to signify permission[15] for their journal—so long, he added, as nothing appeared in it "detrimental to the peace and safety of the colony."[16] It was a formula to stifle any paper, and it is to be said for Pringle's instinct as a journalist, if not for his probity as a contracting party, that he did not precisely stick to it.

Greig reapplied for permission (or rather, as he later pointed out, he sent a copy of his prospectus for his Lordship's perusal).[17] The response, whether written or verbal is not clear, was a "communication" from Col. Bird setting the rate at which the paper would be taxed. With this permission Greig announced publication and produced, on January 7, 1824, No. I of *The South African Commercial Advertiser*. He was thus the first of the petitioners to get into print. The Governor became a subscriber, and in addition to the tax on advertisements imposed a high rate of postage. (It seems likely that the Governor here followed in the footsteps of the British Government in 1819 which hoped that that taxation, imposed by one of the notorious Six Acts, might succeed where prosecution had failed.)

For the first four months of 1824 the infant press prospered quietly. Greig brought out his paper once a week, and the Pringle-Faure monthly journal made its scheduled appearances. After the second number of Greig's paper its editorship was taken over by Pringle and Fairbairn, for the printer found his hands full with the printing and business sides of the venture. The change of editorship was tactfully concealed. Pringle and Fairbairn were already, between them, concerned in a library, a school, and a magazine, and it would not do to have fingers too conspicuously in so many pies. They even tried to palliate, said Pringle, the "morbid jealousy" of the Government by issuing their journal from the Government press, though the

[15] *Records*, vol. XVIII, p. 58. Bathurst's despatch is dated July 7, 1823.
[16] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 316.
[17] *Records*, vol. XVI, p. 469-71.

job was more expensive and worse executed than if Greig had undertaken it.

The calm was delusive. The Governor was accumulating resentment and charges against the press. His opportunity and, indeed, his pressing need to act arrived in May, 1824, the month of what Pringle rather colourfully called the "Cape Reign of Terror." A lawyer named William Edwards was to be tried on a charge of sending two libellous letters to the Governor. Edwards was something of a hero at the time, having been a successful and highly damaging defendant in a libel case a few weeks before. In a series of flamboyant addresses to the court he had denounced members of the government and the judicature in their personal and public capacities and had been attended to by all Cape Town with scandalized delight. The case had been reported in Greig's paper, and in a restrained manner, but the tenor of Edwards's attack was nevertheless there.

The new libel case was a good deal more menacing in its possibilities. Edwards's list[18] of witnesses contained dangerous implications; not only was Lord Charles himself named, there was "a manumitted female slave, a concubine [said Edwards] living with Lord Charles Somerset;" and Dr James Barry, the Colonial Medical Inspector, about whose personal attributes there was (as there has been since) some interesting speculation. Edwards's defence clearly promised to include a personal attack upon the Governor, and in the then state of the judicature (there were often legally-untrained men on the bench) there was no guarantee that all kinds of irrelevance might not be permitted in court. (And it was permitted—out of incompetence, not malice, for the judges were the Governor's creatures. Lord Charles bitterly complained to Earl Bathurst about the judicial stupidity on this occasion.)[19]

Edwards sent in his list of witnesses three days before the trial was to begin. The Governor swooped. Greig was sent for by the Fiscal (an official combining the functions of attorney-general and chief of police), reminded of the conditions he had promised to observe in his paper, asked for £750 security against breach of the conditions, forbidden to mention the trial until it was concluded, and then to confine himself to the

[18] *Records*, vol. XVII, p. 375-6.
[19] ibid. p. 357.

indictment, verdict and sentence. Finally, the proof-sheets of the forthcoming issue were demanded for inspection.[20]

The paper appeared the next day as officially approved—with the exception of one unauthorized item, a postscript which read: "His Majesty's Fiscal, having assumed the Censorship of *The South African Commercial Advertiser*, we find it our duty, as BRITISH SUBJECTS . . . to discontinue publication for the present until we have applied for redress."[21]

Voluntary suspension of his paper was only the first of Greig's counter-moves. He fought a spirited retreat. Two notices were submitted by him for publication in the *Government Gazette*. One invited subscriptions for a full account of the Edwards trial which he planned to have printed in London. The other promised a sheet of advertisements to compensate the public whose paper was "at present suspended on account of the Fiscal's attempt to assume the censorship," and promised, further, after the hue and cry ended, a full account of the paper's suspension.

Needless to say the notices were refused. Greig's next move was to print and post placards announcing the forthcoming publication of the full "Facts" concerned the stopping of the paper. A scuffle ensued when police tried to tear down the placards. The Governor issued a warrant for Greig's presses to be sealed and ordered Greig himself to leave the colony within a month. The warrant did not specify the types and Greig refused to allow the sheriff to touch them. He needed the brief respite. The promised "Facts" were already set up, and all Sunday night, May 9/10, 1824, three press-less printers sweated to pull off impressions by hand. When the Fiscal appeared with a new warrant next morning to seal the types he found Long-market Street filled with people scrambling for copies of the pamphlet which was being showered on them from an upper window of Greig's premises.

Pringle and Fairbairn, effective but not visible actors in these events, were openly involved elsewhere. Two days after Greig's final paper appeared, the second number of *The South African Journal* was published. It contained, among other things, an informed and pointed article by Pringle, entitled 'The Present State and Prospects of the English Immigrants in South Africa'.

[20] ibid. p. 293-4.
[21] ibid. p. 295.

The Settler scheme was certainly open to criticism, and had been from its inception. It had been put into operation with mixed motives—as much to relieve an English problem as a South African one. There had been a certain recklessness and even disingenuousness in the prospectuses outlining the emigrant's future at the Cape. The settlers were many of them ill chosen.[22] The land grants were inadequate, the Eastern Province having been treated as if it possessed the agricultural potential of southern England. By the time Pringle wrote, only a quarter of the settlers remained on their lands. It had been, he declared, "an ill-planned and ill-conducted enterprise," and he pointed out that population had preceded instead of following capital; that great discontent was caused by "an arbitrary system of government, and its natural consequences—abuse of power by local functionaries, monopolies, restrictions, etc.;" that the frontier policy was vacillating and inefficient. The human failures had been aggravated by natural disasters: a wheat rust had for three years destroyed crops, and, climatically, an unprecedented flood had carried land and movables into the Indian Ocean.

Pringle had not an impregnable right to be surprised when the Fiscal summoned him and, having told him that parts of his paper were highly obnoxious, asked for reassurance that he would in future observe his undertaking about politics and personalities. It is true that this analysis of the settlers' troubles by the most articulate of their number was full of responsible concern, and revealed a state of affairs that needed to be remedied. But it is also true that, even in the general terms in which he expressed himself, and despite his disclaiming all charges against individuals, certain personal implications could not be mistaken; they were resented, and one may understand if not sympathize with the reaction.

Pringle would give the Fiscal no assurances. There was, he said, neither law nor impartial tribunal to administer the law. The Government would be judge in its own cause; it alone could decide what was obnoxious and actionable. And as they would not submit to censorship, Pringle and Fairbairn sent a letter next day saying that they thought it inconsistent with

[22] Cory (*Rise of South Africa*, vol. II, p. 54) instances the settler who interred his carrot seed at the bottom of a 2 ft. trench; and another who planted mealies without stripping them off the cob.

their personal safety to continue publication. So within one week the first independent papers at the Cape both elected to cease publication rather than submit to official direction.

This action of Pringle's and Fairbairn's was awkward for the Governor, who had just written to Earl Bathurst his official account of the suppression of Greig's paper.[23] After expressing regret at the discontinuance of a paper from which he had hoped so much in the way of instruction and amusement for his little community, he consoled himself and his correspondent with the thought that the Pringle-Fairbairn journal remained to stop the gap. This was now no longer true. Lord Charles must try to right matters. He sent for Pringle, whose account of their interview runs as follows:

> I found him with the Chief Justice, Sir John Truter, seated on his right hand, and the second number of our South African Journal lying open before him. There was a storm on his brow and it burst forth at once upon me like a long-gathered south-easter from Table Mountain. "So, Sir!" he began—"you are one of those who dare to insult me, and oppose my government"—and then he launched forth into a long tirade of abuse; scolding, upbraiding and taunting me—with all the domineering arrogance of mien and sneering insolence of expression of which he was so great a master—reproaching me above all for my ingratitude for his personal favours. While he thus addressed me, in the most insulting style, I felt my frame tremble with indignation but I saw that the Chief Justice was placed there for a witness of my demeanour, and that my destruction was sealed if I gave way to my feelings, and was not wary in my words. I stood up, however, and confronted this most arrogant man with a look under which his haughty eye instantly sunk, and replied to him with a calmness of which I had not, a few minutes before, thought myself capable. I told him that I was quite sensible of the position in which I stood—a very humble individual before the representative of my sovereign; but I also knew what was due to myself as a British subject and a gentleman, and that I would not submit to be rated in the style he had assumed by any man, whatever were his station or

[23] *Records*, vol. XVII, p. 306.

rank. I repelled his charges of having acted unworthily of my character as a government servant and a loyal subject;—I defended my conduct in regard to the press, and the character of our magazine, which he said was full of "calumny and falsehood;" I asserted my right to petition the king for the extension of the freedom of the press to the colony; and I denied altogether the "personal obligations" with which he upbraided me, having never asked or received from him the slightest personal favour . . . my appointment to the library was in fact a public duty assigned to me in compliance with the recommendations of the Home Government. This situation, however, I now begged to resign, since I would not compromise my free agency for that or any appointment which his lordship could bestow.

Lord Charles then saw he had gone a step too far . . . And as his object then was not absolutely to quarrel with, but merely to intimidate me, he immediately lowered his tone, and had the singular meanness, after the insulting terms he had used, to attempt to coax me by a little flattery, and by throwing out hints of his disposition to promote my personal views if I would conduct myself "discreetly". He wished the magazine, he said, still to go on . . . But this attempt to cajole, when he found he could not bully me, disgusted me even more than his insolence. I saw the motive and despised it . . . I resolutely declined, therefore, his repeated invitations . . . to recommence the magazine unless legal protection were granted to the press. And so ended my last conference with Lord Charles Somerset. I retired and immediately sent in the resignation of my government appointment.[24]

The Governor made one more attempt to contain the situation. Greig was told that the banishment order could be rescinded. He spurned the offer, just as Pringle had spurned the offer made to him.

Revenge was all that remained to the Governor. Greig got out of reach by going to England, where a year's lobbying on

[24] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 324-8.

behalf of his paper was successful.[25] But Pringle and Fairbairn were made to feel the Governor's fury. Their school crumbled in their hands as people found it prudent to withdraw their children from what the Governor styled a "seminary of sedition" run by a pair of "inveterate Radicals" who instilled into their pupils (as he told Lord Bathurst) "the most disgusting principles of Republicanism."[26] Even Pringle's attempt to set up a literary and scientific society—his only remaining public venture—was wrecked. In berating some leading citizens for daring to patronize this society, Lord Charles said it was enough "to know that [it] had originated with Mr Pringle and Mr Fairbairn—for he was fully determined, so long as he held the reins of government, to oppose and thwart everything, without exception, which emanated from them, or in which they were concerned."[27] He invoked a proclamation which had been framed during the first British occupation for the suppression of Jacobin clubs, and forbade further meetings.

Lord Charles did not hold the reins of government for much longer. He was ordered home by the British Government to face an inquiry into his administration of the colony. After some understandable dawdling he embarked in March, 1826, for England where, following a change of government, he shrewdly resigned his office and proceedings against him in Parliament were dropped.

Pringle, his prospects ruined, and £1,000 in debt over the ventures he had entered upon and which were prospering until the Governor set his heel on them, returned to England at about the same time. In the 18 months that intervened between the collapse of his undertakings and his departure for England in April, 1826, he tried to obtain redress, but he was never to receive anything more substantial than sympathy—though this subsequently came to him even from Earl Bathurst. The time, however, was by no means given over to personal grievances—nothing would have been less characteristic of the man. Ever engaged, as Francis Jeffrey put it, "in making men better and happier around [him],"[28] he was for the greater part of 1825 in

[25] *The South African Commercial Advertiser* recommenced publication in August, 1825. Greig returned to the Cape armed with authority from the Home Government to publish under licence from the Governor-in-Council.
[26] *Records*, vol. XVIII, p. 347; vol. XIX, p. 449.
[27] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 332.
[28] Quoted in Leitch Ritchie, op. cit., p. cxviii.

correspondence with the Commissioners of Inquiry on such matters as local government, frontier defence and the treatment of the indigenous races; for which assistance the Commissioners gave him warm thanks. He was also deeply occupied in helping to raise money to relieve distressed settlers.

Back in England, he found employment which gave fuller scope to his ardent and humane spirit. He became secretary to the Anti-Slavery Society, and much of its literature during the ensuing years came from his pen. It was over his signature, in June, 1834, six months before his death from consumption at the age of 45, that there appeared the Society's announcement of the Act of Abolition.

Pringle lived to see the *Commercial Advertiser*, under the editorship of Fairbairn, suppressed once again at Lord Charles's instance (the Governor's return to England did not prevent his pursuing his quarrel) and, after Fairbairn had spent a year in England righting matters, finally re-established in 1829 under a proper press law administered by a reformed judicature. The campaign which Pringle had helped to initiate was successfully concluded.

The history of the press in these years affords many instances more eventful and, in their result, more important. The Fleet Street bookseller, Richard Carlile, courted martyrdom and spent six years in prison. Leigh Hunt received a two-year sentence. Shelley, for what seems to-day a very innocuous piece of free-thinking, was sent down from Oxford; and his *Queen Mab* was used as evidence to debar him from educating his children. Many were banished or transported. The Pringle-Somerset affair was restrained and gentlemanly when we compare its 'libels' with, for example, Cobbett's assertion that the death of Prime Minister Pitt was far from being an irreparable loss and was indeed a source of satisfaction; or even with the engaging scurrility of John Walter, who published a statement in *The Times* that the Dukes of York, Gloucester and Cumberland were insincere in their expression of joy at the king's recovery.

In fairness to Somerset it should be recalled that his attitude (as distinct from the methods) was not wholly without respectable parallel. The humane Sir Rufane Donkin, who was acting-governor during Somerset's leave in 1820, and who is often used as a stick to beat Somerset with, prohibited the Settler, Robert

Godlonton (subsequently editor of *The Grahamstown Journal*) from taking his press to Algoa Bay. He is reported to have said that to allow the press to go forward would be equal to scattering firebrands along the Eastern Frontier.

A temperate opinion was expressed by Somerset's successor, Lieutenant-Governor Bourke, who favoured a free press, and a more intelligible law of libel to be administered by the courts and not the Governor. He said, in 1826, that in the special case of the Colony,

> some efficient control of the Press here is without doubt necessary. The journals which are now published are filled with criticisms upon the action, and misrepresentations of the motives, of His Majesty's Government as relates to the Colonies and of the Colonial Administration. There are not here, as in England and other countries, papers attached to the Executive and written in its defence. The most mischievous misrepresentations therefore remained unanswered, and are submitted to the perusal and in many cases obtain the belief of persons in this limited community from whose good opinion and confidence the Government would otherwise obtain a valuable support.[29]

A governor of the Cape in those days felt himself to be in a special position; he saw his problems as differing not only in degree but in kind from the home government's. He felt perhaps as the head of a university might feel to-day who was called upon to acknowledge the principle of press freedom by permitting a student to run a paper openly and even scurrilously hostile to the university administration. The analogy may be incomplete, but there is enough in it to make Somerset's position appear not wholly wicked or ludicrous.

Of his methods of enforcing his attitude little can be said in extenuation. They were autocratic, vindictive and deceitful. And it was the methods, the threats, delays and subterfuges, which provoked the trouble. A more reasonable governor, unhampered by anti-Jacobin training and temperament, would undoubtedly have got co-operation from so reasonable and gentle a man as Pringle, even had he felt it necessary to deny Pringle's request for the moment.

This is not to assert that there was no principle at stake but

[29] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, vol. II, p. 332.

to point to the importance of personality in this particular episode and to say that this was a historic struggle in only a limited sense. The real issue had already been decided elsewhere and the effect must inevitably, and soon, have been felt at the Cape. The world had moved on, and given South Africa an early reminder that no man or nation is an island.

CARLYLE, WHITMAN, AND THE DEMOCRATIC DILEMMA

JOSEPH JONES

THE END of the American Civil War found relations between America and England far less cordial than they have since become. With the Tories bearing no natural love towards American democracy in any event, and with a number of manufacturers and working men seeing their interest bound up with the cotton economy of the South (largely cut off by naval blockade), the Confederacy had received more than a little English encouragement, especially in the earlier phases of the struggle. The possibility of a war with England, in fact, seemed at times very close. Advice and criticism from English quarters, as a result, was particularly unwelcome to American patriots, in literary circles as well as political, during the latter 1860's.

Among American literary patriots, none had supported the Union more loyally and practically—as government clerk, as volunteer nurse in military hospitals, as writer of patriotic lyrics—than Walt Whitman. The result of his effort was a deepening and disciplining of his work which, but for the impact of the war, might less quickly, less completely have been achieved. This is attested in various of the *Drum-Taps* poems and most notably in 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd.' The war gave Whitman new vitality, new subject-matter, new faith. Not one to bear grudges, Whitman was nevertheless sensitive to harshness against his country; and when such harshness suddenly appeared from a quarter once thought friendly—from a literary, not a professionally political person—he was impelled to strike back.

It was Thomas Carlyle, the erstwhile champion of individualism, who delivered the blow. To a whole generation of American transcendentalists, during twenty-five or thirty years before the Civil War, Carlyle had been a literary hero of the first rank. *Sartor Resartus*, in the 1830's, came as something little short of a revelation from heaven, inducing in Emerson an

attraction to the author that lasted through life, although not without inevitable differences of opinion in later years. Thoreau's essay on Carlyle is a fountain of unrestrained admiration. Rebels themselves, the transcendentalists responded to the truculence and independence of Carlyleian rhetoric without being immediately too well aware, it would seem, of the underlying Calvinistic authoritarianism to which they were congenitally opposed. Walt Whitman, as an heir of transcendentalist thought, could hardly escape sharing such admiration. To him, as well as to Emerson, the deepening pessimism and at length the political totalitarianism of Carlyle must have come as a shock when it finally became apparent. One does not lightly watch an idol crumble.

Carlyle's 'Shooting Niagara: and After?' appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* for August, 1867. Its purpose was to reassert and rehabilitate the theory of aristocracy in opposition to what appeared to Carlyle to be a universal "swarmery" of equalitarianism, which he had come more and more to detest. Its tones are those of exasperation laced with no small amount of invective, verging at the end towards hope for salvaging something out of what is envisaged as the "Niagara leap" into democracy and anarchy—in Carlyle's mind, interchangeable equivalents. It is shot full of reference to current happenings and to current British policy both foreign and domestic, in the year that saw the establishment of Dominion status for Canada; yet nothing is said about so obviously significant an event. This seems strange, especially since Jamaica and Dominica come under close scrutiny, with Dominica serving as a specimen of that kind of colony to which a resolute authoritarian rule should be applied. On Canada, Carlyle's silence is rather eloquent: was Canada also going over Niagara, or was the new Dominion a less convenient because currently less horrible example? Nothing is made of Canada, whatever the reason may have been. Much *is* made, however, of the presumptive consequences of the American Civil War; and it is these, together with the implications which Carlyle attaches to them, that most nearly concern us here.

Shortly afterward, Walt Whitman published two essays in the *Galaxy:* 'Democracy' in December, 1867, and 'Personalism' in May, 1868. These were combined into the long prose pamphlet *Democratic Vistas* which appeared in 1871. This, as we

shall see, provides both a parallel with, and an answer to, Carlyle's attack.

Before involving ourselves too deeply with the differences between Carlyle and Whitman, however, we should look at their similarities. Both, it is quite evident, were entirely earnest and sincere. Since neither was a master of the plain style, both essayists are likely to strike one as turgid in rhetoric and amorphous in structure: not pleasant to read, not easy to follow. If there is a tactical advantage on either side, it probably lies in Carlyle's caustic wit. Both men believe their respective countries to be in grave crisis, and finding little comfort in the immediate situation, look to the future and undertake to prophesy—an activity which, it should be added, came naturally and easily to both. Condemning current society for its vulgarity and hypocrisy, they speak strongly of religion, of salvation of the soul, as urgently required correctives. Both look for the rise of a special class of leaders through whom cultural salvation must finally be achieved.

Carlyle and Whitman are in many respects a couple of well-paired messianics; and if it could be said that the twentieth century had progressed so far as to retire its own messianics into asylums or convalescent homes, there might be no really pressing reason for harking back to these. But it can hardly be claimed that this end has been achieved: we seem, on the contrary, to have grown bigger and far worse ones who all too frequently have managed to take charge of our affairs. With something more than purely academic interest, therefore, we may interest ourselves in hearing these two prophets invoke their interpretations of "destiny," and it will be worth our while to look closely at the leader-class that each envisions as the only possible guide out of chaos.

Carlyle's essay opens on a note of crisis, declaring that in the acceleration of democratic processes—characterized as "swarmery," suggesting the frantic and chaotic behaviour of great masses of insects—the choice of the mob can result in only the poorest possible leaders: leaders into confusion worse confounded. Much of what is said along this line is couched in furious language: all England is seen as sunk in hypocrisy, with reform movements busy "unchaining the Devil;" all art and literature as superficial or worse; all industry as degraded into the dishonest production of the "cheap and nasty." For two

hundred years the English have been "varnishing" the surface of public affairs in an effort to avoid going to the roots of things. There is no hope among the common people: they are slaves by destiny and will be forever the prey of demagogues. Parliament itself is run by penny-newspaper principles, or lack of principles. A vituperative antisemitic attack, in one of the least handsome passages, falls upon Disraeli as reform leader. At one point, Carlyle even spitefully hopes that the country may go ahead and ruin itself as quickly as possible, so that the aristocracy will be led all the sooner to face up to their obligations and authoritarian rebuilding can begin.

The American contribution to the general debacle is only too plain to see: having been caught up in "swarmery" to fight a highly destructive war over nothing at all, Americans can look forward only to a fate worse, if anything, than that facing Englishmen. "Democracy rampant" will see to that, aided by the enfranchised American Negro. On this point the language assumes again a tone of racial arrogance:

> Essentially the Nigger Question was one of the smallest; and in itself did not much concern mankind in the present time of struggles and hurries. One always rather likes the Nigger; evidently a poor blockhead with good dispositions, with affections, attachments—with a turn for Nigger Melodies, and the like—he is the only Savage of all the coloured races that doesn't die out on sight of the White man; but can actually live beside him, and work and increase and be merry. The Almighty Maker has appointed him to be a Servant.[1]

Carlyle does not thereupon quote Genesis to prove that the descendants of Ham are perpetual bondsmen by Biblical decree, as had been fashionable among pro-slavery parsons and slave-holders. Believing in the principle quite as firmly, however, he does go on to develop briefly a theory of servantship which distinguishes between what he terms the "nomadic" and the "permanent" arrangements between master and servant. The "nomadic"—in which the servant is free to make his own contract with the master—is in Carlyle's belief infinitely the worse of the two: "Servantship on the *nomadic* principle, at the rate of so many shillings per day *cannot* be other than misdone."

[1] Thomas Carlyle, 'Shooting Niagara: and After?' in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* (London, 1899), vol. v, p. 1-48.

Nomadic servantship, for people who are divinely ordained to live perpetually as servants anyway, he argues, can only bring deterioration both in the workman and the work he does. Granting such premises, the "contract for life"—that is to say, bondage—is the only just and practicable arrangement possible. This, the argument continues, "was already the Nigger's essential position": why change it?

> Mischief, irregularities, injustices did probably abound between Nigger and Buckra; but the poisonous taproot of all the mischief, and impossibility of fairness, humanity, or well-doing in the contract, never had been there! Of all else the remedy was easy in comparison; vitally important to every just man concerned in it; and, under all obstructions (which in the American case, begirt with frantic "Abolitionists," fire-breathing like the old Chimaera, were immense), was gradually getting itself done. To me individually the Nigger's case was not the most pressing in the world, but among the least so! America, however, had got into *Swarmery* upon it (not America's blame either, but in great part ours, and that of the nonsense *we* sent over to them); and felt that in the Heavens or the Earth there was nothing so godlike, or incomparably pressing to be done. Their energy, their valour, their etc. etc. were worthy of the stock they sprang from—and now, poor fellows, *done* it they have, with a witness. A continent of the earth has been submerged, for certain years, by deluges as from the Pit of Hell; half a million (some say a whole million, but surely they exaggerate) of excellent White Men, full of gifts and faculty, have torn and slashed one another into horrid death, in a temporary humour, which will leave centuries of remembrance fierce enough: and three million absurd Blacks, men and brothers (of a sort), are completely 'emancipated'; launched into the career of improvement—likely to be 'improved off the face of the earth' in a generation or two![2]

Thus far, it is evident, as biographers point out, that 'Shooting Niagara: and After?' belongs to a period of Carlyle's life characterized by decadence and growing bitterness. Coming

[2] ibid. p. 6-7.

from a historian, such talk was a gratuitous insult in the face of a contemporary history about which apparently he had not cared to inform himself: no public man in his proper mind could have dismissed the Civil War so abruptly and contemptuously. But this portion of the essay, which Americans could not help finding offensive, served only as a current illustration of the grand theme to which Carlyle soon returned: the necessity of strong central leadership, preferably of aristocratic pattern, to put down all such "swarmery." This was a familiar doctrine: Carlyle had preached it all his life, and the 'Niagara' essay is but one of his last and strongest affirmations.

In assessing further the universally deplorable situation of the world, Carlyle sees the English aristocracy as bearing up, by and large, quite nobly under threat of deluge. He suggests that work may still be found for some of them in the colonies, where strong men ("vice-kings," if only such could be appointed for life and given sufficient authority) are needed, Dominica offering an example. However, the titled aristocracy as then existing—potentially good as they might be—would not alone prove sufficient to the future. To be sure, they should retain as much control as possible (especially of the schools) and improve whatever institutions they could improve, working towards the reinstatement of aristocracy in its older, stronger sense. Still, there would have to be new accessions of power into the class. Here Carlyle admits the possibility of an "unclassed aristocracy by nature" from which two sorts of special power might be derived: "speculative" power from the "men of wisdom" who are the vocal natural-aristocrats, and "practical" or industrial power from those who are strong but silent. The speculative group must not be misled into false paths: "Art, Poetry, and the like" are all *swarmery*, and literature must be allowed to "run its course into nothingness." The real task of the speculative man is to give new definitions of "liberty;" to restore "God and the Godlike" to men's souls and to the nation; to equate the glorious history of England with the Bible (a task Shakespeare began but did not carry forward very far). To the practical men, the "Industrial Heroes," will fall the tasks of "changing nomadic contract into permanent" (i.e. reconstituting and purifying slavery or serfdom) and of eliminating the alarming tendencies towards "cheap and nasty" in building and manufacturing. Working together with the already titled aristocracy,

and being gradually absorbed into it, these auxiliary classes could restore order and discipline and thereby save the nation: they "might mature and adjust innumerable things."

All this, on the surface, looks something like a compromise between aristocracy and democracy. But however flexible and logical such a formula might seem—and it must be conceded that it does allow for the rise of merit to positions of leadership—it is in the implementation of power that Carlyle's essential Prussianism becomes again apparent. In issuing his invitation to "noble and sorrowful toil . . . fit only for heroes," he contemplates the final necessity of force, and is altogether willing and eager to deliver the sword into his heroes' hands. The few are to command, the many are to obey: and since this is "the basis of all human culture," it is clear, in his view, that "the Drill-Sergeant" must be accorded authority and prestige sufficient to enforce culture. Carlyle's dream-nation, then, would be made to function according to the following pattern:

> But now, what is to hinder the acknowledged King in all corners of his territory, to introduce wisely a universal system of Drill, not military only, but human in all kinds; so that no child or man born in *his* territory might miss the benefit of it—which would be immense to man, woman and child? I would begin with it, in mild, soft forms, so soon almost as my children were able to stand on their legs; and I would never wholly remit it till they had done with the world and me . . . This of outwardly combined and plainly consociated Discipline, in simultaneous movement and action, which may be practical, symbolical, artistic, mechanical in all degrees and modes—is one of the noblest capabilities of man (most sadly undervalued hitherto); and one he takes the greatest pleasure in exercising and unfolding, not to mention at all the invaluable benefit it would afford him if unfolded. From correct marching in line, to rhythmic dancing in cotillon or minuet—and to infinitely higher degrees (that of symboling in concert your "first reverence," for instance, supposing reverence and symbol of it to be both sincere!)—there is a natural charm in it; the fulfilment of a deep-seated, universal desire, to all rhythmic social creatures! In man's heaven-born Docility, or power of being Educated, it is estimable as perhaps the deepest

and richest element; or the next to that of music, of Sensibility to Song, to Harmony and Number, which some have reckoned the deepest of all. A richer mine than any in California for poor human creatures; richer by what a multiple; and hitherto as good as never opened—worked only for the Fighting purpose. Assuredly I would not neglect the Fighting purpose; no, from sixteen to sixty, not a son of mine but should know the Soldier's function too, and be able to defend his native soil and self, in best perfection when need came. But I should not begin with this; I should carefully end with this, after careful travel in innumerable fruitful fields by the way leading to this.

It is strange to me, stupid creatures of routine as we mostly are, how in all education of mankind, this of simultaneous Drilling into combined rhythmic action, for almost all good purposes, has been overlooked and left neglected by the elaborate and many-sounding Pedagogues and Professional Persons we have had, for the long centuries past! It really should be set on foot a little; and developed gradually into the multiform opulent results it holds for us. As might well be done, by an acknowledged king in his own territory, if he were wise. To all children of men it is such an entertainment, when you set them to it. I believe the vulgarest Cockney crowd, flung out millionfold on a Whit-Monday, with nothing but beer and dull folly to depend on for amusement, would at once kindle into something human, if you set them to do almost any regulated act in common. And would dismiss their beer and dull foolery, in the silent charm of rhythmic human companionship, in the practical feeling, probably new, that all of us are made on one pattern, and are, in an unfathomable way, brothers to one another.[3]

Such discipline through drill would be aimed at settling, once for all, the issue between "Anarchy and Anti-Anarchy," which Carlyle supposes "would have to come to sheer fight at last."

Patience, silence, diligence, ye chosen of the world!

[3] ibid. p. 41-43. In passing, it is instructive to observe how much this sort of thing enters into anti-totalitarian satires of recent years, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* offering perhaps the most carefully elaborated exposition.

> Slowly or fast, in the course of time, you will grow to a minority that can actually step forth (sword not yet drawn, but sword ready to be drawn), and say: "Here we are, Sirs; we also are now minded to *vote*—to all lengths, as you may perceive. A company of poor men (as friend Oliver termed us) who will spend all our blood, if needful." [4]

Here we have the picture, in its completed form, of a minority which sees itself as divinely appointed to rule, severely disciplines itself (and as many of the mass as it can command) towards ultimate seizure of rule by force, and undertakes thenceforward the task of national control. All this is right simply by definition: the kind of might by which the minority will finally be able to establish itself, is synonymous with right: the Drill-Sergeant is right because he has a plan, because he knows what he wants, because the Almighty has been whispering in his ear. It would not be unjust to Carlyle's system, I think, to call it 'neo-feudalism', seeing that its intention is to re-establish a very tightly-structured society with a small ruling class at the head, whose privileges of sovereignty are linked with the responsibilities of providing for the welfare of the subject masses. This, as a label, will serve better than 'fascism' the purposes of the present discussion, since the term "feudalism" is the one Whitman uses in opposition to "democracy" and since 'fascism' —although Carlyle has been identified often enough with fascist theory—carries at present so heavy a burden of adverse connotation. Behind the customary fireworks of Carlyle there lies, then, if the foregoing interpretation is correct, a logical and— to the minds of not a few followers, both in Carlyle's day and our own—a persuasive design for the reconstruction of all society into a rigid but nonetheless benevolent new order: rigid because no other system can be made to work, benevolent because sanctioned and directed from on high. To equalitarian democracy, both in theory and practice, it is unalterably opposed.

This is the challenge that Whitman set himself to answer, and, in the process, produced *Democratic Vistas*. In his first paragraph, Whitman takes his stand with Mill's essay on Liberty and is soon involved with the oppositions inherent in feudalism and

[4] ibid. p. 44.

democracy: "The United States are designed either to surmount the gorgeous history of feudalism, or else prove the most tremendous failure of time." Whether or not with his eye directly upon Carlyle's accusation of *swarmery*, he freely admits that American society is "canker'd, crude, superstitious, and rotten," offering a most deplorable spectacle of moral decadence:

> I say we had best look our times and lands searchingly in the face, like a physician diagnosing some deep disease. Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States. Genuine belief seems to have left us. The underlying principles of the States are not honestly believ'd in, (for all this hectic glow, and these melodramatic screamings,) nor is humanity itself believ'd in. What penetrating eye does not everywhere see through the mask? The spectacle is appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy throughout. The men believe not in the women, nor the women in the men. A scornful superciliousness rules in literature. The aim of all the *littérateurs* is to find something to make fun of. A lot of churches, sects, &c., the most dismal phantasms I know, usurp the name of religion. Conversation is a mass of badinage. From deceit in the spirit, the mother of all false deeds, the offspring is already incalculable. An acute and candid person, in the revenue department in Washington, who is led by the course of his employment to regularly visit the cities, north, south, and west to investigate frauds, has talk'd much with me about his discoveries. The depravity of the business classes of our country is not less than has been supposed, but infinitely greater. The official services of America, national, state, and municipal, in all their branches and departments, except the judiciary, are saturated in corruption, bribery, falsehood, maladministration; and the judiciary is tainted. The great cities reek with respectable as much as non-respectable robbery and scoundrelism. In fashionable life, flippancy, tepid amours, weak infidelism, small aims, or no aims at all, only to kill time. In business, (this all-devouring modern word, business,) the one sole object is, by any means, pecuniary gain. The magician's serpent in the

> fable ate up all the other serpents; and money-making is our magician's serpent, remaining to-day sole master of the field. The best class we show, is but a mob of fashionably dress'd speculators and vulgarians. True, indeed, behind this fantastic farce, enacted on the visible stage of society, solid things and stupendous labors are to be discover'd, existing crudely and going on in the background, to advance and tell themselves in time. Yet the truths are none the less terrible. I say that our New World democracy, however great a success in uplifting the masses out of their sloughs, in materialistic development, products, and in a certain highly-deceptive superficial popular intellectuality, is, so far, an almost complete failure in its social aspects, and in really grand religious, moral, literary, and esthetic results. In vain do we march with unprecedented strides to empire so colossal, outvying the antique, beyond Alexander's, beyond the proudest sway of Rome. In vain have we annex'd Texas, California, Alaska, and reach north for Canada and south for Cuba. It is as if we were somehow being endow'd with a vast and more and more thoroughly-appointed body, and then left with little or no soul. [5]

This critique of the 'Gilded Age' recurs throughout the essay, and there is added to it a frequent note of complaint about the neglect of the American people by their own artists, who are seen to be, for the most part, subservient to foreign models, complacent, superficial. Thus it appears that Whitman is ready to grant the truth of much that Carlyle says and implies about post-war America. It is upon the ground of theory, not contemporary fact, that he finds he must differ. This is apparent from a footnote to the essay, referring directly to Carlyle:

> "Shooting Niagara."—I was at first roused to much anger and abuse by this essay from Mr. Carlyle, so insulting to the theory of America—but happening to think afterwards how I had more than once been in the like mood, during which his essay was evidently cast, and seen persons and things in the same light (indeed some might say there are signs of the same feeling in these Vistas)—I have since read it again, not only as a

[5] Walt Whitman, *Representative Selections*, ed. Stovall, rev. ed. (New York, 1939), p. 385-386.

> study, expressing as it does certain judgments from the highest feudal point of view, but have read it with respect as coming from an earnest soul, and as contributing certain sharp-cutting metallic grains, which, if not gold or silver, may be good, hard, honest iron. [6]

In the text itself, Whitman disclaims answering "at least by any specific and local answer, many a well-wrought argument and instance, and many a conscientious declamatory cry and warning—as, very lately from an eminent and venerable person abroad—things, problems, full of doubt, dread, suspense, . . ." It would be misleading, however, to suppose that this is a soft answer to turn away wrath. Unwilling to involve himself in formal controversy, Whitman was nevertheless unable to avoid the issues Carlyle raised, and in fact he does, a few pages farther along, come directly to grips:

> I myself see clearly enough the crude, defective streaks in all the strata of the common people; the specimens and vast collections of the ignorant, the credulous, the unfit and uncouth, the incapable, and the very low and poor. The eminent person just mention'd sneeringly asks whether we expect to elevate and improve a nation's politics by absorbing such morbid collections and qualities therein. The point is a formidable one, and there will doubtless always be numbers of solid and reflective citizens who will never get over it. Our answer is general, and is involved in the scope and letter of this essay. We believe the ulterior object of political and all other government, (having, of course, provided for the police, the safety of life, property, and for the basic statute and common law and their administration always first in order,) to be among the rest, not merely to rule, to repress disorder, &c., but to develop, to open up to cultivation, to encourage the possibilities of all beneficent and manly outcroppage, and of that aspiration for independence, and the pride and self-respect latent in all characters. (Or, if there be exceptions, we cannot, fixing our eyes on them alone, make theirs the rule for all.)
>
> I say the mission of government, henceforth, in civilized lands, is not repression alone, and not authority

[6] ibid. p. 391.

> alone, not even of law, nor by that favorite standard of the eminent writer, the rule of the best men, the born heroes and captains of the race, (as if such ever, or one time out of a hundred, get into the big places, elective or dynastic)—but higher than the highest arbitrary rule, to train communities through all their grades, beginning with individuals and ending there again, to rule themselves. What Christ appear'd for in the moral-spiritual field for human-kind, namely, that in respect to the absolute soul, there is in the possession of such by each single individual, something so transcendent, so incapable of gradations, (like life,) that, to that extent, it places all beings on a common level, utterly regardless of the distinctions of intellect, virtue, station, or any height or lowliness whatever—is tallied in like manner, in this other field, by democracy's rule that men, the nation, as a common aggregate of living identities, affording in each a separate and complete subject for freedom, worldly thrift and happiness, and for a fair chance for growth, and for protection in citizenship, &c., must, to the political extent of the suffrage or vote, if no further, be placed, in each and in the whole, on one broad, primary, universal, common platform.[7]

From this, it is to be seen that Whitman's reply to Carlyle rests upon an evolutionary rather than upon a logical, contractual theory of government. Grappling with legalism, he asserts that "Democracy too is law, and of the strictest, amplest kind," adding:

> Many suppose, (and often in its own ranks the error,) that it means a throwing aside of law, and running riot. But, briefly, it is the superior law, not alone that of physical force, the body, which, adding to, it supersedes with that of the spirit. Law is the unshakable order of the universe forever; and the law over all, and law of laws, is the law of successions; that of the superior law, in time, gradually supplanting and overwhelming the inferior one.[8]

In another passage of similar tenor, directed specifically at European critics, he goes briefly on the offensive:

[7] ibid. p. 395-396.

[8] ibid. p. 397.

A portion of our pages we might indite with reference toward Europe, especially the British part of it, more than our own land, perhaps not absolutely needed for the home reader. But the whole question hangs together, and fastens and links all peoples. The liberalist of to-day has this advantage over antique or mediaeval times, that his doctrine seeks not only to individualize but to universalize. The great word Solidarity has arisen. Of all dangers to a nation, as things exist in our day, there can be no greater one than having certain portions of the people set off from the rest by a line drawn—they not privileged as others, but degraded, humiliated, made of no account. Much quackery teems, of course, even on democracy's side, yet does not really affect the orbic quality of the matter. To work in, if we may so term it, and justify God, his divine aggregate, the People, (or, the veritable horn'd and sharp-tail'd Devil, *his* aggregate, if there be who convulsively insist upon it)—this, I say, is what democracy is for; and this is what our America means, and is doing—may I not say, has done? If not, she means nothing more, and does nothing more, than any other land. And as, by virtue of its kosmical, antiseptic power, Nature's stomach is fully strong enough not only to digest the morbific matter always presented, not to be turn'd aside, and perhaps, indeed, intuitively gravitating thither—but even to change such contributions into nutriment for highest use and life—so American democracy's. That is the lesson we, these days, send over to European lands by every western breeze.

And, truly, whatever may be said in the way of abstract argument, for or against the theory of a wider democratizing of institutions in any civilized country, much trouble might well be saved to all European lands by recognizing this palpable fact, (for a palpable fact it is,) that some form of such democratizing is about the only resource now left. *That*, or chronic dissatisfaction continued, mutterings which grow annually louder and louder, till, in due course, and pretty swiftly in most cases, the inevitable crisis, crash, dynastic ruin. Anything worthy to be call'd statesmanship in the Old World, I should say, among the advanced students, adepts, or

> men of any brains, does not debate to-day whether to hold on, attempting to lean back and monarchize, or to look forward and democratize—but *how*, and in what degree and part, most prudently to democratize.[9]

This is of a piece with Whitman's continual assertions in *Leaves of Grass* and is the final base of the optimism which carried through his life: time, he believed implicitly, was on his side, and the inexorable tendencies of social and political evolution must surely bear him out. We arrive, thus, at the fundamental ground of disagreement between the aristocratic Englishman and the democratic American. Carlyle, we may be sure, would have had nothing to do with such ideas of evolutionary gradualism; to him, the "superior law" was not somewhere in the future but had existed from the very foundations of the world, and man's business was to rediscover and obey it. Whitman, convinced to the contrary that the future must necessarily supersede the past and in so doing fulfil the past, could never accept correction as preferable to growth. Their differences are quite plainly irreconcilable.

Whitman's position, as we have seen, gave him confidence in the future that present difficulties could not entirely shake. At the same time, he developed much more completely his examination of the current American situation and attempted to foresee what the most profitable lines of change should be. Confident as he may have been, he did not believe that evolution could simply be left to itself; that America could afford to omit planning to assist the process. He observed with considerable distress that the intelligentsia, who even then should be working for national progress, had too little faith in the people:

> I feel, with dejection and amazement, that among our geniuses and talented writers or speakers, few or none have yet really spoken to this people, created a single image-making work for them, or absorb'd the central spirit and the idiosyncrasies which are theirs—and which, thus, in highest ranges, so far remain entirely uncelebrated, unexpress'd.[10]

Much is said in *Democratic Vistas* about the low state of American literature and the lack of native genius. Again, the evolutionary hypothesis comes to Whitman's aid, and he sees a three-

[9] ibid. p. 398-399.

[10] ibid. p. 404.

fold "American programme" beginning with the establishment of political democracy, progressing thenceforward to a high stage of material prosperity, and culminating at last in the flowering of a national expression in the arts. If American literature in his own time, therefore, contains more to be censured than praised, he sees no cause for despair. Unlike Carlyle, who could see nothing ahead for literature but increasing "nothingness," he finds reason for hope.

This brings us, now, to Whitman's design for cultural leadership—and to further divergence from Carlyle. With the prospects for literature so potentially bright (the first two stages of the "American programme" having been substantially achieved) and yet the present condition of it so sadly lacking, what must be done? Certainly no national academy or any other such authoritarian body could be proposed; yet guidance and counsel and example would obviously be needed. Early in the essay, and indeed at numerous places throughout, Whitman pays high tribute to the power of literature, asserting that the moral and artistic unity of spirit is the only firm basis of enduring union: political agreement is not enough, materialism is not enough. The achievement of such unity through the power of literature—and within the general category of literature he includes philosophy, religion, and a good bit else—can best come, he believes, through the agency of a class of men he calls "literatuses." Here is his visionary description of the "band" upon which will rest the task of providing a democratic substitute for feudalism:

> Yet I have dream'd, merged in that hidden-tangled problem of our fate, whose long unraveling stretches mysteriously through time—dream'd out, portray'd, hinted already—a little or a larger band—a band of brave and true, unprecedented yet—arm'd and equipt at every point—the members separated, it may be, by different dates and States, or south, or north, or east, or west—Pacific, Atlantic, Southern, Canadian—a year, a century here, and other centuries there—but always one, compact in soul, conscience-conserving, God-inculcating, inspired achievers, not only in literature, the greatest art, but achievers in all art—a new, undying order, dynasty, from age to age transmitted—a band, a class, at least as fit to cope with current years, our dangers, needs, as those who, for their times, so long, so well, in armor or

> in cowl, upheld and made illustrious, that far-back feudal, priestly world. To offset chivalry, indeed, those vanish'd countless knights, old altars, abbeys, priests, ages and strings of ages, a knightlier and more sacred cause to-day demands, and shall supply, in a New World, to larger, grander work, more than the counterpart and tally of them.[11]

It would be obviously futile to raise up such a band of anti-feudalists, however, if democracy were unprepared to receive them, although beyond some indeterminate point they would be preparing, more and more, their own reception. To make the equation balance, there must in consequence appear virtually a whole population of readers equal to whatever strain their writers might put upon them. Nothing, in Carlyle's opinion, could be more absurd, but Whitman persists in his belief, declaring:

> In fact, a new theory of literary composition for imaginative works of the very first class, and especially for highest poems, is the sole course open to these States. Books are to be call'd for, and supplied, on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half-sleep, but, in highest sense, an exercise, a gymnast's struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay—the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start or frame-work. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does. That were to make a nation of supple and athletic minds, well-train'd, intuitive, used to depend on themselves, and not on a few coteries of writers.[12]

This, since Whitman's time, has become the ideal if by no means always the achieved result, of American mass-education.

Having informed ourselves, now, of some of the fundamental oppositions between Carlyle and Whitman, we may turn to see how, thus far, their views have failed or prospered. By our own mid-century, the rise of totalitarian states had been accompanied by sufficient extension and strengthening of their democratic antitheses to bring us to a far more dramatic showdown

[11] ibid. p. 442. [12] ibid. p. 443-444.

than was ever apparent before 1900. Our predicament could hardly have been foreseen by either Carlyle or Whitman: their troubled era, in retrospect, seems the Golden Age itself.

In-so-far as mere language is concerned, 'democracy' appears to have prevailed. No current regime of any consequence admits—one is tempted to say, dares to admit—that it is not after some fashion or other "democratic." Carlyle would instantly pounce upon this as continuing proof of cant and hypocrisy among nations, and there would be more than enough evidence to support the charge. There does not seem, however, much likelihood that a formally-stated arrangement of aristocracy, or feudalism—call it what you will—can any longer find favour. On paper, at least, such political theory is dead. In practical terms, on the other hand, we have ourselves been witnesses to more than enough experimentation along very much the lines that Carlyle laid down. One difference is apparent: that the totalitarian eruptions of this tortured century have accepted no previously existing body of aristocrats around which to build their power-centres. Rather, they have destroyed, all too often in the name of democracy, whatever elements of stability existed and have started over afresh to drive the world to utopia at the point of a bayonet. Both Carlyle's and Whitman's schemes have been distorted and perverted, and we are left with oligarchies that are travesties of any rational aristocracy; 'people's democracies' that enslave their peoples. Without the resurgence of a debased Carlyleian politics, there would have been little necessity for what has amounted to an enslavement of expert intellect, in all quarters, resulting in the suicidal proliferation of technological terror. The "Drill-Sergeant" for science is hard at work. Logic, to the extent that totalitarianism has triumphed among us, has defeated faith, and a 'Cold War' stalemate confronts us with the prospect of total annihilation.

Even within this desperate *cul-de-sac*, it seems to me that Whitman's pattern is the one still offering the most hope. Democracy is not yet beaten, and there is a perverted semblance of it even among the dictatorships which is amenable to possible or (let us hope) even probable evolutionary development away from the paths of present tyranny. Carlyle's demand for an authoritarian aristocracy finds fewer sympathizers to-day than a century ago. Whitman's, for a responsible "band" of cultural

leaders associated by spiritual ties alone within the framework of democratic freedom, has become increasingly important. On the brink of a greater Niagara than any thinker of a hundred or even fifty years ago could have conceived, it takes no powerful persuasion for us to agree with Whitman's warning:

> In the highly artificial and materialistic bases of modern civilization, with the corresponding arrangements and methods of living, the force-infusion of intellect alone, the depraving influences of riches just as much as poverty, the absence of all high ideals in character—with the long series of tendencies, shapings, which few are strong enough to resist, and which now seem, with steam-engined speed, to be everywhere turning out the generations of humanity like uniform iron castings—all of which, as compared with the feudal ages, we can yet do nothing better than accept, make the best of, and even welcome, upon the whole, for their oceanic practical grandeur, and the restless wholesale kneading of the masses—I say of all this tremendous and dominant play of solely materialistic bearings upon current life in the United States, with the results as already seen, accumulating, and reaching far into the future, that they must either be confronted and met by at least an equally subtle and tremendous force-infusion for purposes of spiritualization, for the pure conscience, for genuine esthetics, and for absolute and primal manliness and womanliness—or else our modern civilization, with all its improvements, is in vain, and we are on the road to a destiny, a status, equivalent, in its real world, to that of the fabled damned.[13]

[13] ibid. p. 442-443.

A TEXT-BOOK OF ENGLISH FOR SOVIET SCHOOLS

P. D. HEY

A TEXT-BOOK of English (or indeed any text-book in the humanities) can be viewed as a commentary on the attitudes and values of the culture from which it is drawn. The question might be asked by the reader, "Why has this work been chosen for the schools or the university?" or "What are the characteristics of the society consciously or unconsciously described by the author?" What one might call the sociological approach can be made as much in the case of the school grammar as in that of the novel.

The following is an analysis of a Soviet text-book[1] that came into my hands recently, and is an attempt to show the Soviet viewpoint regarding Western society, as well as Soviet methods of indoctrination through the text-book. The analysis is made easy by the fact that the writers make explicit their point of view, and in this instance it does not require much sociological insight to determine their attitudes.

For the most part the book is made up of a series of extracts from well-known authors, and has been prepared for children aged about seventeen in the tenth grade in the Russian Federation (the largest member of the U.S.S.R.). Detailed instructions are given to teachers in the introduction on the best way to conduct each lesson. Work for the year is divided into two sections: eight lessons are undertaken in the first half and seven in the second. The declared intention of the authors is to introduce the children to new grammatical forms and vocabulary, and to enable the student to read unseens with the help of a dictionary. Most "Lessons" take the following form: 1. grammar exercises; 2. lexical exercises; 3. an account of the life and work of an author; 4. an extract; 5. explanatory notes; 6. exercises on the text.

"Lesson One" opens with an extract, in English, from V. I. Lenin, *The Task of the Youth Leagues*, and this sets the tone of the rest of the book.

[1] *English text-book for the 10th class of the middle school* by I. A. Nelidov and L. R. Todd. (State Educational Book Publishers, 1959.)

> And if you were to ask why the teachings of Marx were able to capture the hearts of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would receive only one answer: it was because Marx took his stand on the firm foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism. Having studied the laws of development of human society, Marx realized the inevitability of the development of capitalism, which was leading to Communism. And the principal thing is that he proved this only on the basis of the most exact, most detailed and most profound study of this capitalist society, by fully assimilating all that earlier science had produced. (p. 7)

The "Grammar Exercises" that follow include:

> Point out the subjects in the following sentences:
>
> 1. Transforming nature is one of the greatest tasks of our people. (p. 9)

"Lesson Two" is an account of the life and work of Lomonosov, the Russian scientist and poet after whom Moscow university is named. "Lesson Three" gives an account of Thomas Hardy, in which the student is left in no doubt of what Hardy lacked in political insight:

> He described the tragedies in the lives of small people —farmers, school-teachers, small tradesmen. He sees that people are often unhappy, and it seems to him that some strange force, a fate hostile to humanity, works against them and destroys their lives. He did not understand that it was the unfavourable conditions of capitalism which caused the unhappiness in the lives of his characters and not a hostile fate. (p. 16)

An extract from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* follows. In the exercises on the lesson, the following are of interest:

> Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the text:
>
> 1. The . . . of workers in capitalist countries are very low, while food and lodging are very dear. (p. 18)
> 4. The . . . of life in a Socialist country are altogether different from those in a capitalist country.
> 5. The peasants of India are hardly able to . . . through the dry season, they are so poor. (p. 19)
>
> . . . Speak on the following topics:
>
> 3. Point out the part in the text which illustrates the

> fact that men and women do not have equal rights in England. Add what else you know on the subject of equal rights for men and women. (p. 19)

An extract from *Three Men in a Boat* (Jerome K. Jerome) has no political commentary beyond a brief "Jerome's books contain no social criticism; his aim was simply to make his readers laugh. (p. 23)

"Lesson Five" begins with a series of exercises:

> Translate into Russian, paying attention to the form and the use of the gerund:
>
> 1. Communists in all lands see in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union a model party of the working class. (p. 28)

The extract is from H. G. Wells (*Kipps*); and of Wells the authors have this to say:

> . . . H. G. Wells criticised capitalism and called himself a socialist, but actually he never understood socialism and was hostile to Marxism-Leninism. He imagined that decaying capitalist society could be replaced by a society ruled over by engineers and scientists. This is a reactionary theory opposed to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. (p. 29)
>
> Read Part II of "The School-days of Kipps",[2] then answer the following questions:
>
> 4. What are the characteristic features of the bourgeois school?
> 5. What are the main differences between the Soviet school and the school in a capitalist country? (p. 32)

"Lesson Six" has an extract from *The Splendid Dream* by Jack London. There is a comment in the introduction to the extract:

> *Love of Life* . . . was read to him (Lenin) during his last illness by N. K. Krupskaya (Lenin's wife). (p. 35)

Later,

> His [i.e. Jack London's] best works reflect the social contradictions of capitalist society. (p. 35)

In speaking specifically of *The Splendid Dream*, the authors say:

> Soon he [i.e. Martin Eden] finds that the people of

[2] A particularly unfavourable account, it might be said, of an English nineteenth-century school, "Cavendish Academy".

bourgeois society are almost all narrow-minded and ignorant. (p. 36)

"Lesson Eight" begins with "Grammar Exercises":

Fill in the blanks with the Present Indefinite, Past Indefinite or Future Indefinite . . .

2. The Soviet Union . . . no progressive plans; it . . . no country and no people. (p. 46)

A later exercise, based on an extract, asks:

4. Why did Martin despise the Bourgeoisie still more when he became a famous writer?
5. What are the characteristic features of the bourgeoisie which Jack London describes in this passage from *Martin Eden*? (p. 50)

And so throughout the book. O. Henry is described as avoiding "important social themes, and [giving] happy endings to his stories, even to the sad ones." (p. 57) An extract from Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* is included, with this comment on Dreiser:

. . . Dreiser was in the Soviet Union in 1927. The great creative work of building Socialism which was in progress in our country at that time had a tremendous influence on the writer. What he saw in Russia convinced him that the only way out of the social contradictions of bourgeois society is in abolishing capitalism and building Socialism. He became an active participant in the struggle of the progressive forces in America, supported the working-class movement and became a member of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. in 1945. (p. 64)

Galsworthy

. . . saw the decline of his class and truthfully described it, but in the works written after the First World War and the Great October Socialist Revolution, he is much less critical. His best work is the *Forsyte Saga*, a series of six novels dealing with three generations of an English Bourgeois family. (p. 72)

In "Lesson Twelve," the student is asked to put the following sentences into the passive:

1. The Great October Socialist Revolution brought about great changes in our country.

2. The Ministry of Education is working out plans for improving the work of the schools.
3. The People's Democracies successfully carry out their plans for economic and cultural development. (p. 79)

Later in the same exercise, the student is asked to translate the following into Russian, "paying attention to the different meanings of the italicized words":

1. The American prisoners of war in Korea made a statement that they were very well *treated* by the army of the Korean Democratic Republic. (p. 80)

George Bernard Shaw is described as being "petty-bourgeois and idealistic, but his exposure of capitalist society places him among the most important representatives of critical realism in twentieth century English literature." (p. 81) An extract from *John Bull's Other Island* is given. An exercise follows:

Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the text.

5. The members of the foreign workers' delegation said they were deeply . . . by what they saw in the Soviet Union. As they were leaving our country, they said they wished to . . . the Soviet people that they would tell everyone that the Soviet Union wanted peace and not war. (p. 85)

A later exercise on another extract from *John Bull's Other Island* asks:

What kind of people are elected as deputies to the Supreme Soviet by citizens of our country? (p. 94)

The South African author included in the book is Peter Abrahams, and there is an extract from *The Path of Thunder*. The extract describes Lanny Swartz's return from Cape Town where he has gained an arts degree. As usual, the extract is introduced by a short account of the society from which the author comes:

Peter Abrahams' novel *The Path of Thunder* is interesting because it gives a true picture of life in the Union of South Africa. The colonizers of South Africa, the English and the Boors, pitilessly exploit the local population. The native inhabitants, the Bantus, the Bushmen, the Hottentots and other Negro peoples have no right to own land nor to get an education. They may be employed only at unskilled work. They have to live in reservations

where the land is poor. Many of them work on the plantations of the white masters for next to nothing.

The condition of the coloured people in South Africa is little better. Formally they have the right to education and to do skilled work, but it is very difficult for them to make use of this right. Coloured people receive less pay than white people for the same work. They are allowed to live in big towns, for example in Cape Town, but in special districts only.

The Path of Thunder does not deal with great social events. It tells the story of the tragic death of a young coloured man, Lanny Swartz, and a white girl, who love each other in spite of the 'colour bar' set up by the white colonists. The fate of these two young people reflects the inhumanity of the whole system of relations between the white masters and the coloured races. (p. 98)

Exercises on the text include:

Translate into Russian, paying attention to the italicized parts.

1. Well-fed and warmly clothed, Soviet people *snap their fingers* at winter's cold. (p. 101)

Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the text.

1. The day he was received into the Young Communist League always remained in his . . . as an . . . of great importance. (p. 102)

A final "Revision Lesson" is written by Ray Watkins. It gives an account of Lancashire, and something of its history:

To meet the enormous demand for cotton cloth and maintain their rate of profit, the mill-owners brought from the villages of Kent and Sussex the children of the workless peasants, driven off their land by the squires: and on this virtual slave labour were built the fortunes of famous men like Sir Robert Peel, the Tory Prime Minister. In the eighteen forties, the new industrial wealth of her textile and engineering industries had made England the richest country in the world, but the creators of her wealth lived in miserable poverty.

In his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, written in 1845, Frederick Engels has left a terrible picture of the life of the industrial areas. The scenes he

> describes—the poor houses, the narrow streets, the dark mills—are still hardly changed. (p. 106)

For the Western reader this text-book has numerous points of interest. By far the most significant is the strong political emphasis that is given to every extract.[3] This squares with the stress in Soviet Education on 'The History of the Party' and 'Marxism-Leninism'. For example, all university students, no matter what their field, are compelled to incorporate this study in their curriculum at all stages.[4]

In the work reviewed there seems to be a close link between literary and political studies. Most exercises train the student in grammar and in the 'correct' viewpoint. The extracts often suggest the decadence of the West, and deviation of the author from approved Communist thought is sharply commented upon.

[3] The reader is left in no doubt as to what he should think. The text-book would seem to be a useful source of current Soviet ideology, and provides sociological insight into the society.

[4] "Soviet authorities unequivocally recognise textbooks as 'a powerful instrument for forming the Marxist-Leninist world outlook'" (Quoted from *Pravda* July 6, 1953 in "Education in the U.S.S.R." U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Bulletin No. 14 (1957), p. 86.)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Coleridge, Critic of Society, by John Colmer. Oxford University Press, 1959. xiii, 229p. 30s.

IN the foreground, in the early years of Coleridge's political activity, were the French Revolution with all its early messages of inspiration; the outbreak of war between England and France; the growing discontents and pressures for reform in England, and the resistance to these by the Pitt Ministry, taking shape for example in the Treason Trials of the Nineties and the state of 'emergency' in England indicated by Pitt's two Bills of 1795, which limited the freedom of the Press and the right of public assembly. These helped to precipitate Coleridge into action—that is, after the abandonment of the Pantisocracy scheme, into the formulation and publication, through the spoken or the written word, of his passionate hostility to any measures which prevented men from performing the sacred duty of "promulging the Truth;" and thence into the endless, if intermitted enquiry, continuing throughout his life, of what the 'truth' about society involved. As he, perhaps wryly, noted in 1803, "Truth still more than Justice blind & needs Wisdom for her Guide."

In the early days Coleridge enjoyed the happiness of sharing political views and even some political solutions with his friends, and even with a considerable 'opposition' party of Englishmen. And, as we are glad to be so forcibly reminded by Dr Colmer's new book *Coleridge, Critic of Society*, in his periods of 'public' journalism on the *Morning Post* and the *Courier*, as well as in his spell of public service as secretary to Sir Alexander Ball in Malta, Coleridge proved himself well in tune with his times,a most astute and effective thinker on many immediate problems of practical politics. But as in all the areas of his thinking, deepening insight—or "abstruse research"?—tended to make him more and more solitary; and his solitariness, perhaps, led to such mistakes as the undertaking of *The Friend*, and perhaps to some of its timidities and worst obscurities; though it led also, no doubt, to the achievement of *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1830), which at last impressed itself as a force on the minds of his contemporaries.

In its totality, Coleridge's political (or sociological) career demonstrates once again that "appetite for the Whole and the Vast" which, together with the power patiently exercised of minute observation, stimulated Coleridge to his most valuable insights.

Dr Colmer, defining his scope with exactness and some severity, has performed a feat of compression. In a hundred and eighty packed pages of text he presents, for the first time, a comprehensive narrative and descriptive account of all Coleridge's political writings, quoting often from jottings in the *Notebooks* and from the letters, as well as from the published works. He seeks also to appraise the published writings, and to probe Coleridge's problems of communication. Readers of this journal will remember Dr Colmer's brief account of this subject published in the issue of September, 1958. One may guess at the many temptations to expansion Dr Colmer must have resisted; and one is grateful for the sense of massive detail thoroughly mastered, and therefore made accessible, with which the book leaves one. It is thoroughly reliable and informative and useful. (The index is admirable, and there is a valuable appendix containing some hitherto unreprinted *Morning Post* articles.)

What do we hope that the accessibility of all this material will lead to? A proper editing of the texts, illuminated by references to other sources, will certainly be aided by this book. And beyond that, as Dr Colmer would no doubt agree, there still lies the task of interpretation. Aspects of Coleridge's thinking are not isolable. It is common knowledge (though now, through this book, more precise knowledge, coming nearer to understanding) that Coleridge moved away from many of the radical views of his youth, that his opposition for example to 'reform' legislation (even in the best causes) looks strangely illiberal in retrospect, and so on. But whatever local disagreements and unedifying recognitions sympathetic readers of Coleridge may have come to they have probably never doubted either the originality or the profound consistency of the mind so singularly capable of separating words from things, true from false reasoning, and of perceiving the relationships between different parts of experience.

> The great object in writing on the Constitution is to avoid being imposed on by the names of *things*, as of

> *Property* & to keep the attention steadily fixed on men, and their actual and actuating principles, motives, and impulses—Custom, Law &c.

This note, written during the composition of *The Friend*, states a principle everywhere evident in Coleridge's writing, and illuminated by many of the Notebook jottings quoted in Dr Colmer's book:

> Poverty, whatever can justify the designation of 'the poor' ought to be a transitional state to which no man ought to admit himself to belong, tho' he may find himself *in* it because he is passing *thro*' it, in the effort to leave it. Poor men we must always have, till the Redemption is fulfilled, but *The Poor*, as consisting of the *same* individuals! O this is a sore accusation against society. (1831)

As even this note fleetingly suggests, the humane and warm-hearted impulses that provoked Coleridge's thinking were inseparable from his religious mode of approach to all problems. In a letter of December 1796 to the radical Thelwall, he expounded as he understood it the doctrine enjoined by Christianity, commenting: "Here is *truth* in theory; and in practice a union of energetic *action*, and more energetic *Suffering*. . . . Christianity regards morality as a process . . . [having] no resting-place."

All Coleridge's 'private' journalism shows the vitality of this faith. It led him to some of his finest insights, especially regarding the human will; and this is one of the areas of intersection of all Coleridge's 'worlds.' Dr Colmer suggests that Coleridge's "desire to make his views respectable had . . . an interesting origin in the nature of his early family relationships," and cites the famous letter to his brother George of March, 1798, as an example of the tone Coleridge adopted in defence. But this letter is more interesting for many things in it, for example the eloquent and deeply felt passage describing the will, which connects it so closely with *The Ancient Mariner*. And it is surely not accidental that the published prose should attain heights on related subjects. Coleridge's vivid understanding of the will and its relation to political power and its abuse is memorably expressed in *The Statesman's Manual*, where he elaborates the account of the will "in abstraction," concluding:

> . . . these are the marks, that have characterized the masters of mischief, the liberticides, the mighty hunters of mankind, from Nimrod to Bonaparte.

The last image here leads one to the central Coleridgean theme, that of the "One Life." Coleridge's own vision of it was fitful, and it is far from easy for us to pursue it. But especially since the enlightenment of all the recent critical and scholarly work on Coleridge, we are no longer entitled to dismiss as "strange" or "curious" (these are Dr Colmer's adjectives, characterizing the response of an English reader of, say, 1817), Coleridge's blending of morality, politics, religion and literature. Nor, I am sure, are we inclined to; for it is much more than a pleasure to be plunged into the strenuous and generous working mind and spirit of Coleridge.

ZOË GIRLING

* * *

Shakespeare for South African Schools, ed. by J. L. du Plooy and V. H. Vaughan. London, Macmillan. 7s. 6d. each.
King Lear. 1958. xxi, 194p.
Macbeth. 1960. xlv, 139p.

A statement in the Preface to *King Lear* asserts that Afrikaans-speaking students (who are oddly called "students with Afrikaans as their 'official' language") who wish to read Shakespeare have special disadvantages which the editors believe can be alleviated by notes and glossaries devised to meet the peculiar problem. It might be argued that students who can scarcely handle modern colloquial English with any fluency are ill-advised to attempt the nuances and philosophical sophistications of a great adult writer using an English idiom over three-and-a-half centuries old. But since, despite these conditions, the editors feel that the task is worth attempting, success or failure must be assessed according to the extent to which they realize their intention.

For three important reasons this series may be regarded as a failure: first, the notes and introductions are written carelessly. Indeed, so poor is the standard of English at times that one is alarmed to think that the series has already been prescribed. Apart from such inaccuracies (Preface to *Lear*) as saying that

Shakespeare was born *four* centuries ago, and then some three paragraphs later speaking of his works as being written "*three* centuries ago," the style is slovenly. We read that "This is *too* true . . . ;" that "Shakespeare should be studied for literary, historical reasons . . ." [sic], and so on. Some statements are touched with the idiosyncracy of a more modern Lear: "It is therefore fortuitous that Shakespeare offers so very much . . . to fascinate the young mind, if the word-artistry, characterisation and other features of the poet are brought to them by an inspiring . . . teacher." Macbeth is reproved for his "imaginative" fears; and "well-known" is rendered "well known," with impartiality. Even if prefaces are seldom read, there is no excuse for writing of this standard.

Secondly, the notes often fail to elucidate the text as thoroughly as several standard Shakespeare editions do. For "equivocator" for example, the editors offer: "One who would make use of words or expressions that had a double meaning, in order to mislead. (By doing so he might defeat the ends of justice in a court of law.)" This explanation offers a literal but not a functional meaning. It is very difficult to see how any young Afrikaner struggling with the text would be any the wiser. He is told nothing of the fact that James I had against him a very antagonistic Roman Catholic Church that hoped to depose him or even to instigate his murder, and then to place a member of the "true faith" on the vacant throne. Nor does the note explain that when James demanded from all his subjects an oath of allegiance, the Pope countered by using the Jesuit doctrine of Equivocation, by which Roman Catholics could swear and yet be free from the binding force of the oath. The Porter's drunken witticisms, then, not only touch on Jacobean politics, but—if rightly considered in terms of the witches—highlight one of the main themes of the play. It is to be doubted whether the gap between the "blasted heath" and "the open veld" has been bridged. There are dozens of other moments in the text where similar comments would hold good.

Thirdly, the accuracy of some of the notes and comments is suspect, and the editors cannot escape their responsibility here by pointing to the variations to be found among commentators. They contend that they worked on the principle of accepting "the most plausible explanation" when authorities disagreed. Surely, however, to make "rump-fed" (*rump-fed runyon*) mean

"fed on remnants of meat" will delight informed readers more for its humour than for its reliability. "I conjure you" is inaccurately rendered as "I will call upon you," for the original *Conjuro Te* was the opening line of a spell to raise spirits during acts of sorcery and often of necromancy. "I call upon you" is completely inadequate, unless much fuller explanations are offered. And the editors are wrong in seeing the "rise" of witchcraft at a period of decline of the Church. The Church attacked witchcraft (mainly during the infamous Inquisition) only when it felt strong enough to do so—the very reverse of the editors' contention. The implication that witchcraft flourished chiefly among England's ignorant poor is hardly happier, for many of the leading nobles of the Elizabethan age practised sorcery or witchcraft. A study of some of the Papal Bulls of the 15th century and H. N. Paul's recent *The Royal Play of Macbeth*, would have helped the editors to avoid some of these misconceptions.

With the best will in the world it is difficult to see how these notes make the work of an Afrikaans-speaking student any easier than those to be found in the more reliable editions already available. Indeed this enterprise might have succeeded in its aim had the editors returned to practical teaching in the class-room for a year or so, and then devised notes of a much more detailed and less obvious nature. Intention and practice do not meet in this series at present.

B. W. ROSE

* * *

The Oral Approach to English as a Second Language, by G. M. N. Ehlers. London, Macmillan, 1959. 185 p., bibliography and index. 8s. 6d.

THIS concentrated little book will be of value to all who teach English. Dr Ehlers deals expressly with the problems of English as a second language in South Africa. "In 1902 English became the official language of the Transvaal, and hence the sole medium of instruction in the schools, except in teaching the Dutch language and Bible History, where the medium could be Dutch. In 1905 an initial Dutch medium was sanctioned. Under the 'Smuts Act' of 1907 the use of the Dutch medium, in

teaching Afrikaans-speaking children, was extended. After 1911 the parent could choose the medium of instruction: English or Dutch, or both. This meant a considerable recession of English as a medium in teaching Afrikaans-speaking children. In 1918 Afrikaans became the third official language of the Union and rapidly replaced both Dutch and English as the medium for Afrikaans-speaking pupils. Today English is only a subject in the Afrikaans medium schools" and yet "English is not a foreign language to the Afrikaans-speaking pupil." In these circumstances Dr Ehlers fully acknowledges the importance of English "to cultivate in the pupil a love for English literature . . . ; to train him for the duties of a citizen, not only of a bilingual fatherland, but of the Western group of nations of which he is a member . . . and of which the English-speaking world is the very heart; . . . and to provide an indispensable part of his moral training." This is fair, indeed generous; but one questions, in 1960, whether the solidarity of Afrikaans with Western culture is as true and clear as Dr Ehlers assumes. The notion of English as a moral influence, which is touched on two or three times in the book, strikes me as curious. For literature is a dissolving as well as a consolidating moral influence. Not in schools, perhaps: for the English sixth form, where the challenging function of literature is introduced, corresponds in South Africa to the early years at a university. The point is a small one in the context of Dr Ehler's book. But one is very sensitive in South Africa these days and leaps to assert the privilege of literature to foster the spirit of freedom before that of conformity.

The strength of Dr Ehlers's approach is his awareness that English must be taught as a living tongue, independent of the young Afrikaner's own language. Hence the admirable and unwavering insistence on speech and the full bodily actions it comprises; on dramatization and mime; and on realia* of all kinds. All this is wise and one loses all consciousness that such work is intended for non-English-speaking students. For this reason Dr Ehlers's book will stimulate every teacher of English. Yet this, in its turn, brings a further reflection. The methods

*_Realia:_ objects or actualities. "The extensive use of realia," says Dr Ehlers, "is a feature of the oral approach. The classroom should be a veritable, but orderly, magazine of objects and pictures, assembled by the teacher, with the help of the children where possible. Actions and demonstrations, facial expressions and gestures, should further be used to give reality to learning activities."

described in such helpful detail seem appropriate to English-speaking schools where so much time is available, directly and indirectly, for tuition. Can they be adequately practised in schools where only a few periods a week are given to them? "Though English thus cannot, and should not, be used as a medium in teaching any subject, other than the English language itself, in the Afrikaans-medium school, proficiency in English cannot be attained unless this language is freely used as a medium." For all Dr Ehlers's care, skill, and manifest love of English, my feeling remains that a bilingual country is best served by dual-medium schools.

Dr Ehlers omits to consider three things which would merit attention in future editions of his book. The first is the use of radio. This is surely an excellent means of using English "in the affairs of life generally." Discussion of English programmes in class would imply listening to them out of class and this seems fully to Dr Ehlers's purpose. In addition, the whole concept of teaching English vividly and well to young Afrikaners lays a heavy responsibility on the teacher, who is usually Afrikaans. *Quis custodet ipsos custodes?* Dr Ehlers deals with this problem in his last chapter, but one would have thought school broadcasts, supervised, perhaps by Dr Ehlers, but using English speakers, deserved comment from him. Teaching French in this way is very popular and effective in English schools.

I have entire sympathy with Dr Ehlers's recommendations for teaching verse. He makes of it an *active pleasure* and buttresses his arguments on Coleridge. These sections are of especial interest to teachers and foreshadow that moving of speech from the circumference to the centre which I believe is now indispensable to the progress of literary understanding. It is therefore strange to find no mention of drama, which is as much the father of literature as architecture is said to be of the plastic arts. Again, Dr Ehlers's school library contains no recorded verse, I noted, though he several times recommends its use in the classroom.

P. C. BIRKINSHAW.

A Review of English Literature, edited by A. Norman Jeffares, Vol. 1, No. 1, January, 1960. (Quarterly.) Longmans.4s. Subscription rate, 15s. per annum.

AT A TIME when the English-speaking world's total output of writing-about-writing assumes such intimidating proportions the appearance of a new literary journal is likely to be received with mixed feelings. The publish-or-be-damned school of academic writer will rush to assess the possibilities of the new outlet; the scholar may add a card or two to his index with the sinking sense of yet more material to be sifted; the general reader who wants more than is provided by the week-end reviews but less than he is given in, say, *Essays in Criticism* or *Critical Quarterly*, may take a hasty look to satisfy himself that the newest arrival is just another product of inbred professionalism.

That the general reader should not so satisfy himself is one of the aims of the editor of *A Review of English Literature*. In the editorial manifesto in the opening number, Professor Jeffares of Leeds proclaims his intention of offering criticism of English literature, or rather of literature in English, "to an audience which it is hoped will consist not only of those who are professionally engaged in the study and teaching of literature but also of general readers."

"Literature," he properly reminds us, "is a thing to be enjoyed; and if the literary critic is to succeed he must communicate his enjoyment of it." The postulate is an admirable one. No criticism which is not the product of a genuine involvement with its subject—of 'enjoyment' in a broad sense—can strike home to the reader. Too much that passes for criticism is the result of perfunctory or dutiful labour, pursued along lines ordered from without and not from within. Leaning heavily on current critical attitudes or techniques, it lacks the zest as well as the penetration which enjoyment or love of his author can, though not necessarily will, engender in the critic.

The cynic might conclude that Professor Jeffares's postulate about enjoyment (he does not neglect the usual functions of elucidating and illuminating books, and modifying and developing taste) is a tautological if apparently modest way of saying that the journal will publish only good criticism—a groundless confidence, since it depends on the supply of good critics,

who in any age are few in number. In fact, Professor Jeffares puts his case without foolish optimism; he promises simply to try to exclude certain obvious and avoidable faults.

> To write for the general reader and the specialist the critic must avoid current tricks of critical technique. Obscurity and unnecessary difficulty may indeed lend a pseudo-scientific air to over-specialised criticism, but the best corrective to such pretentious writing is the example of critics who write clearly and with zest, and like Dryden, Johnson, Coleridge and Arnold, write to be widely read.

Whether the editor will be able to keep a sufficiently tight rein on his contributors to continue to realize his intention is a question worth asking. Some of them have not been un-at-home in a different climate, and the observation holds true also of contributors listed for two succeeding numbers. Whether, too, intention and a tight rein will solve not merely the question of contributions but of readership is an even larger question. The economic aspects of such a venture in the modern cultural situation have their comment in the litter of little-journal corpses strewing the field. Can the critic to-day compete with the giants of the past and "write to be widely read," at any rate without all sorts of irrelevant and adventitious aids?

The first number of the journal makes an agreeable if not a sensational start. Without throwing up a new Dryden or Johnson or even Saintsbury it goes a long way to fulfilling the editorial intention. Professor James Sutherland argues persuasively that the modern reader who is ignorant of the sermons of Robert South is missing a good deal in the way of prose style and wit. Professor James Kinsley offers a scholarly discussion of the literary sources, in early Scottish and in English Augustan poetry, of Robert Burns. Edmund Blunden writes with unobtrusive knowledge and sympathy on the poet Thomas Hood, and Mr Graham Hough urges with conviction a return to the novels of George Moore. The perennially provoking subject of metre draws some stimulating comment from Professor C. S. Lewis. Mr J. M. Cohen brings personal experience and authority to bear on the art of translation in our time, and Mr John Press reviews some new anthologies and surveys the problem of anthology-making. Finally, the present reputation

of Dryden is subjected to a fine, scholarly consideration by Professor F. T. Prince.

A Review of English Literature complements some current trends in criticism. By emphasizing the need for 'enjoyment' it may help not only to serve the needs of that unknown quantity, the 'general reader', but serve the cause of criticism by pointing a return to general readability in critical writing and a rejection of the stylistic atrocities, from the pseudo-scientific to the late-Leavisite sub-Jamesian, which characterize far too many reputable journals. On all these grounds Professor Jeffares's journal deserves to prosper.

A. D. HALL

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Abstract of English Studies, Vol. III, No. 4, April, 1960. Boulder, Colo., U.S.A. Subscription, $4 a year.

An official monthly publication of the National Council of Teachers in the U.S.A. (Address: 704 South Sixth St., Champaign, Ill., U.S.A.) "AES contributors examine more than 400 periodicals, and each month AES publishes short, objective summaries of all relevant articles appearing in current issues." The periodicals examined are both American and foreign.

Essays and Studies, 1960. Collected by M. St Clare Byrne. Published for the English Association by John Murray, London. 114p. 13s. 6d. (Contents: C. J. Sisson, "Shakespeare's Helena and Dr William Harvey;" W. Moelwyn Merchant, "Ralph Knevet of Norfolk: Poet of Ciuill Warre;" Arthur Brown, "The Play Within a Play: An Elizabethan Dramatic Device;" C. V. Wedgwood, "The Poems of Montrose;" Una Ellis-Fermor, "The Nature of Plot in Drama;" Margery M. Morgan, " 'Back to Methuselah': The Poet and the City;" D. M. Low, "Contemporary Trends in English Pronunciation")

Reason and Imagination: A Study of Form and Meaning in Four Poems by R. L. Brett. London, Oxford University Press, 1960. vii, 143p. 15s. (Contents: I, Poetic Meaning; II, Milton's *Lycidas;* III, Pope's *Essay on Man;* IV, Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner;* V, T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*)

The Teaching of Structural Words and Sentence Patterns, by A. S. Hornby. London, Oxford University Press, 1959. xiii, 170p. 6s. 6d.

All Length is Torture, by Simon de Moor. Amsterdam/Cape Town, A. A. Balkema, 113p. 15s. (A study of Shakespeare's tragedies)

Aspects of Science Fiction ed., with an introduction, by G. D. Doherty. London. John Murray. 218p. 5s. 6d. (The Albermarle Library for Schools)

This is an anthology of short stories compiled, for use in schools, by the Senior English Master at Poundswick Grammar School, Manchester. A short but comprehensive introduction offers a history of science fiction (beginning with Lucian of Samosata in the second century A.D., or even, with qualifications, with Plato in the third century B.C.) and outlines the varied approaches and themes of writers of this genre. Mr Doherty urges the (very considerable) imaginative and literary claims of the best science fiction. Quoting Brian Aldiss, "Everything is unlikely if we consider coolly the stars, the fingernails," Mr Doherty remarks that "at the heart of almost every SF story there is a problem or a hypothesis born of this sense of wonder." The problems range from the immediate moral and social dilemmas of man's inability to regulate his command of natural forces, to the imaginative challenge which modern time theories throw out to our conventional concepts.

This well-produced little volume should help to dispel some of the easy contempt for science fiction which the cheaper novelettes and films, with their bug-eyed monsters, pseudo-scientific machinery and ignorance of elementary scientific principle, have evoked from persons who ought to know better.

The dozen short stories include Well's 'The Crystal Egg,' such powerful and chastening tales as Katherine Maclean's 'Pictures Don't Lie' and A. E. van Vogt's 'Dormant' (widely known through Edmund Crispen's *Best SF* in the Faber paperbacks) and Stephen Leacock's humorous 'The Man in Asbestos.' The book contains also a glossary of common SF terms, and exercises.

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